

GEORGE WASHINGTON.  
*First President of the United States.*

# LIFE AND TIMES OF WASHINGTON

SCHROEDER-LOSSING

REVISED, ENLARGED, AND  
ENRICHED: AND WITH A  
SPECIAL INTRODUCTION  
By EDWARD C. TOWNE, B. A.

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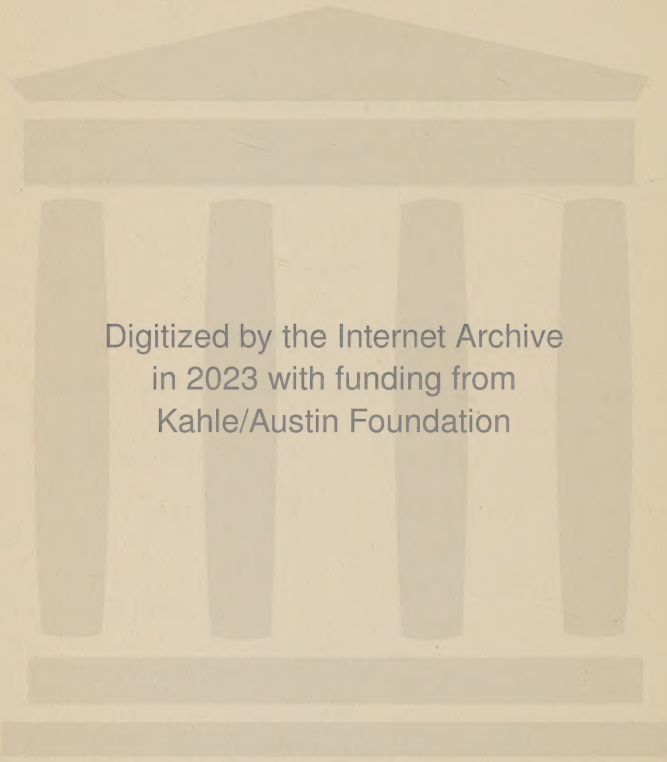
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## PART V.

### WASHINGTON A PRIVATE CITIZEN.

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#### CHAPTER I.

#### WASHINGTON'S RETURN TO PRIVATE LIFE.

1783-1784.

WHEN Washington retired from the command of the army it was undoubtedly his intention to devote the remainder of his life to his favorite pursuit of agriculture. His estate had suffered considerably from his devotion to public duties, and his private affairs now demanded all his attention. The Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania instructed the delegates of that State in Congress to propose a public remuneration for his services, but when the proposition was submitted for his approbation he promptly declined it. This was in strict consistency with his uniform character of disinterestedness. A liberal grant would have been voted by Congress and sanctioned by the nation, but Washington would not consent to receive it.

His feelings on finding himself a private citizen are expressed in his correspondence. In a letter to Governor Clinton, written only three days after his arrival at Mount Vernon, he says: "The scene is at length closed. I feel myself eased of a load of public care and hope to spend the remainder of my days in cultivating the affections of

good men, and in the practice of the domestic virtues." "At length, my dear marquis," said he to his noble and highly-valued friend, Lafayette, "I have become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac, and under the shadow of my own vine and my own fig tree, free from the bustle of a camp and the busy scenes of public life, I am solacing myself with those tranquil enjoyments of which the soldier, who is ever in pursuit of fame—the statesman, whose watchful days and sleepless nights are spent in devising schemes to promote the welfare of his own, perhaps the ruin of other countries, as if this globe was insufficient for us all—and the courtier, who is always watching the countenance of his prince in the hope of catching a gracious smile—can have very little conception. I have not only retired from all public employments, but am retiring within myself, and shall be able to view the solitary walk and tread the paths of private life with heartfelt satisfaction. Envious of none I am determined to be pleased with all, and this, my dear friend, being the order of my march, I will move gently down the stream of life until I sleep with my fathers."

But a mind accustomed to labor for a nation's welfare does not immediately divest itself of ancient habits. That custom of thinking on public affairs, and that solicitude respecting them, which belong to the patriot in office, follow him into his retreat. In a letter to General Knox, written soon after his resignation, Washington thus expressed the feelings attendant upon this sudden transition from public to private pursuits. "I am just beginning to experience the ease and freedom from public cares, which however desirable, takes some time to realize, for, strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that it was not until lately I could get the better of my usual custom of ruminating, as soon as I awoke in the morning, on the business of

the ensuing day, and of my surprise at finding, after revolving many things in my mind, that I was no longer a public man or had anything to do with public transactions. I feel now, however, as I conceive a wearied traveller must do who, after treading many a painful step with a heavy burden on his shoulders, is eased of the latter, having reached the haven to which all the former were directed, and from his house-top is looking back and tracing with an eager eye the meanders by which he escaped the quicksands and mires which lay in his way, and into which none but the all-powerful Guide and Dispenser of human events could have prevented his falling."

For several months after arriving at Mount Vernon, almost every day brought him the addresses of an affectionate and grateful people. The glow of expression in which the high sense universally entertained of his services was conveyed, manifested the warmth of feeling which animated the American bosom. This unexampled tribute of voluntary applause, paid by a whole people to an individual no longer in power, made no impression on the unassuming modesty of his character and deportment. The same firmness of mind, the same steady and well-tempered judgment, which had guided him through the most perilous seasons of the war, still regulated his conduct, and the enthusiastic applauses of an admiring nation served only to cherish sentiments of gratitude and to give greater activity to the desire still further to contribute to the general prosperity.

Soon after peace was proclaimed Congress unanimously passed a resolution for the erection of an equestrian statue of Washington, at the place which should be established for the residence of the government.

The Legislature of Virginia, too, at its first session after his resignation, passed the following resolution:

“Resolved, That the Executive be requested to take measures for procuring a statue of General Washington, to be of the finest marble and best workmanship, with the following inscription on its pedestal:

“The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia have caused this statue to be erected as a monument of affection and gratitude to George Washington, who, uniting to the endowments of the hero, the virtues of the patriot, and exerting both in establishing the liberties of his country, has rendered his name dear to his fellow-citizens, and given the world an immortal example of true glory.”\*

In addition to the attention which he bestowed on his own estate Washington endeavored to ameliorate the condition of agriculture generally. Nothing could be more wretched than the general state of this useful art in America. To its amelioration by examples which might be followed, and by the introduction of systems adapted to the soil, the climate, and to the wants of the people, the energies of his active and intelligent mind were now in a great degree directed. No improvement of the implements to be used on a farm, no valuable experiments in husbandry, escaped his attention. His inquiries, which were equally minute and comprehensive, extended beyond the limits of his own country, and he entered into a correspondence on this interesting subject with Arthur

\* This statue was executed by Houdon, and stands in the capitol at Richmond. It is in the costume of commander-in-chief of the army, and is considered an excellent likeness. Another statue of Washington, by Canova, was in the Roman costume, and in a sitting posture. It was made for the State of North Carolina, and was unfortunately destroyed when the capitol was burnt. Another statue stands in the statehouse at Boston. It was the result of a private subscription. A fourth, by Greenough, adorns the grounds of the capitol at Washington.



Young, the celebrated English writer, and with other foreigners who had been most distinguished for their additions to the stock of agricultural science.

Mingled with this favorite pursuit were the multiplied avocations resulting from the high office he had lately filled. He was engaged in an extensive correspondence with the friends most dear to his heart—the foreign and American officers who had served under him during the late war—and with almost every conspicuous political personage of his own, and with many of other countries. Literary men also were desirous of obtaining his approbation of their works, and his attention was solicited to every production of American genius. His countrymen who were about to travel were anxious to receive from the first citizen of the rising Republic, some testimonial bearing his signature, and all those strangers of distinction, who visited this newly-created empire, were ambitious of being presented to its founder. In addition to visitors of distinction, and those who had claims of ancient friendship, he was subjected to the annoyance of visitors, who, without any just pretension to such an honor, made visits to Mount Vernon merely to gratify their curiosity, and to the scarcely less wearisome annoyance of tedious and unnecessary letters. Of these unwelcome intrusions upon his time Washington thus complained to an intimate military friend. “It is not, my dear sir, the letters of my friends which give me trouble or add aught to my perplexity. I receive them with pleasure, and pay as much attention to them as my avocations will permit. It is references to old matters with which I have nothing to do—applications which oftentimes cannot be complied with—inquiries, to satisfy which would employ the pen of an historian—letters of compliment, as unmeaning perhaps as they are troublesome, but which must be attended to—and the

common-place business — which employ my pen and my time often disagreeably. Indeed these, with company, deprive me of exercise, and, unless I can obtain relief, must be productive of disagreeable consequences. Already I begin to feel their effects. Heavy and painful oppressions of the head and other disagreeable sensations often trouble me. I am determined therefore to employ some person who shall ease me of the drudgery of this business. At any rate, if the whole of it is thereby suspended, I am determined to use exercise. My private affairs also require infinitely more attention than I have given or can give them under present circumstances. They can no longer be neglected without involving my ruin.”

It was some time after the date of this letter before he introduced into his family a young gentleman, qualified by education and manners to fill the station of private secretary and friend. This was Mr. Tobias Lear of New Hampshire, who had graduated at Harvard college.

The numerous visits which Washington received made Mount Vernon anything but a place of seclusion and repose, and “during these stirring times Mrs. Washington performed the duties of a Virginia housewife and presided at her well-spread board with that ease and elegance of manners which always distinguished her.”\*

This multiplicity of private avocations could not entirely withdraw the mind of Washington from objects tending to promote and secure the public happiness. His resolution never again to appear in the busy scenes of political life, though believed by himself and by his bosom friends to be unalterable, could not render him indifferent to those measures on which the prosperity of his country essentially depended.

\* Custis, “Memoir of Martha Washington.”

It is a very interesting fact that Washington was among the first, if not the very first of our public men, who were impressed with the importance of connecting the western with the eastern territory, by facilitating the means of intercourse between them. To this subject his attention had been directed in the early part of his life. While the American States were yet British colonies he had obtained the passage of a bill for opening the Potomac so as to render it navigable from tide-water to Wills creek, a distance of about 150 miles. The river James had also been comprehended in this plan, and he had triumphed so far over the opposition produced by local interests and prejudices, that the business was in a train which promised success, when the Revolutionary War diverted the attention of its patrons, and of all America, from internal improvements to the still greater objects of liberty and independence. As that war approached its termination, subjects which for a time had yielded their pretensions to consideration, reclaimed that place to which their real magnitude entitled them, and internal navigation again attracted the attention of the wise and thinking part of society. Accustomed to contemplate America as his country and to consider with solicitude the interests of the whole, Washington now took a more enlarged view of the advantages to be derived from opening both the eastern and the western waters; and for this, as well as for other purposes, after peace had been proclaimed, he traversed the western parts of New England and New York. "I have lately," said he, in a letter to the Marquis of Chastellux, "made a tour through the lakes George and Champlain as far as Crown Point; then returning to Schenectady I proceeded up the Mohawk river to Fort Schuyler, crossed over to Wood creek, which empties into the Oneida lake and affords the water communication with Ontario. I then

traversed the country to the head of the eastern branch of the Susquehanna and viewed the lake Otsego and the portage between that lake and the Mohawk river at Canajoharie. Prompted by these actual observations, I could not help taking a more contemplative and extensive view of the vast inland navigation of these United States, and could not but be struck with the immense diffusion and importance of it, and with the goodness of that Providence which has dealt His favors to us with so profuse a hand. Would to God we may have wisdom enough to improve them. I shall not rest contented until I have explored the western country and traversed those lines (or great part of them) which have given bounds to a new empire." The journey here referred to was performed in company with Governor Clinton while the army was encamped at Newburg.

Scarcely had he answered those spontaneous offerings of the heart which flowed in upon him from every part of a grateful nation, when his views were once more seriously turned to this truly interesting subject. Its magnitude was also impressed on others, and the value of obtaining the aid which his influence and active interference would afford to any exertions for giving this direction to the public mind, and for securing the happy execution of the plan which might be devised, was perceived by all those who attached to the great work its real importance. Jefferson, who had taken an expanded view of it concluded a letter to Washington containing a detailed statement of his ideas on the subject in these terms:

"But a most powerful objection always arises to propositions of this kind. It is, that public undertakings are carelessly managed and much money spent to little purpose. To obviate this objection is the purpose of my giving you the trouble of this discussion. You have re-



tired from public life. You have weighed this determination, and it would be impertinence in me to touch it. But would the superintendence of this work break in too much on the sweets of retirement and repose? If they would I stop here. Your future time and wishes are sacred in my eye. If it would be only a dignified amusement to you, what a monument of your retirement would it be! It is one which would follow that of your public life and bespeak it the work of the same great hand. I am confident that would you, either alone or jointly with any persons you think proper, be willing to direct this business, it would remove the only objection, the weight of which I apprehend."

In September, 1784, Washington fulfilled the intention expressed in his letter to the Marquis of Chastellux, by making a tour to the western country. He went on horseback, using pack-horses for his tent and baggage. He crossed the Alleghanies by Braddock's road, examined his lands on the Monongahela river, and returned through the wilderness by a circuitous route, examining the country in order to determine the practicability of connecting the Potomac and James rivers with the western waters by means of canals. The whole journey extended some 680 miles.\* After returning from this tour Washington's first moments of leisure were devoted to the task of engaging his countrymen in a work which appeared to him to merit still more attention from its political than from its commercial influence on the Union. In a long and interesting letter to Mr. Harrison then Governor of Virginia, he detailed the advantages which might be derived from opening the great rivers, the Potomac and the James, as high as should be practicable. After stating, with his accus-

\* Sparks.

tomed exactness, the distances and the difficulties to be surmounted in bringing the trade of the west to different points on the Atlantic, he expressed unequivocally the opinion that the rivers of Virginia afforded a more convenient and a more direct course than could be found elsewhere for that rich and increasing commerce. This was strongly urged as a motive for immediately commencing the work. But the rivers of the Atlantic constituted only a part of the great plan he contemplated. He suggested the appointment of commissioners who should, after an accurate examination of the James and the Potomac, search out the nearest and best portages between those waters and the streams which run into the Ohio. Those streams were to be accurately surveyed, the impediments to their navigation ascertained, and their relative advantages examined. The navigable waters west of the Ohio toward the great lakes were also to be traced to their sources and those which emptied into the lakes to be followed to their mouths. "These things being done, and an accurate map of the whole presented to the public, he was persuaded that reason would dictate what was right and proper." For the execution of this latter part of his plan he had also much reliance on Congress, and, in addition to the general advantages to be drawn from the measure, he labored in his letters to the members of that body to establish the opinion that the surveys he recommended would add to the revenue by enhancing the value of the lands offered for sale. "Nature," he said, "had made such an ample display of her bounties in those regions that the more the country was explored the more it would rise in estimation."

The assent and co-operation of Maryland being indispensable to the improvement of the Potomac, he was equally earnest in his endeavors to impress a conviction

of its superior advantages on those individuals who possessed most influence in that State. In doing so he detailed the measures which would unquestionably be adopted by New York and Pennsylvania for acquiring the monopoly of the western commerce, and the difficulty which would be found in diverting it from the channel it had once taken. "I am not," he added, "for discouraging the exertions of any State to draw the commerce of the western country to its seaports. The more communications we open to it the closer we bind that rising world (for indeed it may be so called) to our interests, and the greater strength shall we acquire by it. Those to whom nature affords the best communication will, if they are wise, enjoy the greatest share of the trade. All I would be understood to mean, therefore, is, that the gifts of Providence may not be neglected."

But the light in which this subject would be viewed with most interest and which gave to it most importance, was its political influence on the Union. "I need not remark to you, sir," said he, in his letter to Governor Harrison of Virginia, "that the flanks and rear of the United States are possessed by other powers—and formidable ones, too: nor need I press the necessity of applying the cement of interest to bind all parts of the Union together by indissoluble bonds—especially of binding that part of it which lies immediately west of us to the middle States. For what ties, let me ask, should we have upon those people? How entirely unconnected with them shall we be, and what troubles may we not apprehend if the Spaniards on their right and Great Britain on their left, instead of throwing impediments in their way as they now do, should hold out lures for their trade and alliance? When they get strength, which will be sooner than most people conceive, what will be the consequence of their

having formed close commercial connections with both or either of those powers, it needs not, in my opinion, the gift of prophecy to foretell."

This idea was enlarged and pressed with much earnestness in his letters to several members of Congress.

The letter to Governor Harrison was communicated to the Assembly of Virginia, and the internal improvements it recommended were zealously supported by the wisest members of that body. While the subject remained undecided, Washington, accompanied by Lafayette, who had crossed the Atlantic and had arrived at Mount Vernon on the 17th of August, paid a visit to the capital of the State. Never was reception more cordial or more demonstrative of respect and affection than was given to these beloved personages. But amidst the display of addresses and of entertainments which were produced by the occasion, the great business of internal improvements was not forgotten, and the ardor of the moment was seized to conquer those objections to the plan which yet lingered in the bosoms of members who could perceive in it no future advantage to compensate for the present expense.

An exact conformity between the acts of Virginia and of Maryland being indispensable to the improvement of the Potomac, a resolution was passed soon after the return of Washington to Mount Vernon, requesting him to attend the Legislature of Maryland, in order to agree on a bill which might receive the sanction of both States. This agreement being happily completed, the bills were passed, and thus began that grand system of internal improvement by which the eastern portion of the Union is bound to the west. Canals and portages were the forerunners of the railroads by which every part of the country is now traversed, and the whole Republic is firmly united

in bonds of mutual intercourse, which, it is fondly hoped will prove perpetual.

The Legislature of Virginia seized the occasion afforded by the passage of these acts to signalize the affection and gratitude of the State towards her favorite son. A bill was drafted by Mr. Madison, the preamble of which was in the following words:

“Whereas, it is the desire of the representatives of this commonwealth to embrace every suitable occasion of testifying their sense of the unexampled merits of George Washington, Esquire, toward his country, and it is their wish in particular that those great works for its improvement, which, both as springing from the liberty which he has been so instrumental in establishing and as encouraged by his patronage will be durable monuments of his glory, may be made monuments also of the gratitude of his country. Be it enacted, &c.”

By this bill the treasurer was instructed to subscribe, in behalf of the State, for a specified number of shares in each company. Just at the close of the session, when no refusal of their offer could be communicated to them, a bill was suddenly brought in which received the unanimous assent of both houses, authorizing the treasurer to subscribe for the benefit of Washington the same number of shares in each company as were to be taken for the State. The actual value of the shares was \$40,000.

Washington was greatly embarrassed by this mark of gratitude. It afforded him pleasure to see that his character and services were appreciated by his fellow-citizens. But he would not depart from his determination to receive no pecuniary reward for his public services.

To Madison, who conveyed to him the first intelligence of this bill, his difficulties were thus expressed:

“It is not easy for me to decide by which my mind was



most affected upon the receipt of your letter of the sixth instant — surprise or gratitude. Both were greater than I had words to express. The attention and good wishes which the Assembly has evinced by their act for vesting in me 150 shares in the navigation of the rivers Potomac and James, is more than mere compliment — there is an unequivocal and substantial meaning annexed. But, believe me, sir, no circumstance has happened since I left the walks of public life which has so much embarrassed me. On the one hand, I consider this act, as I have already observed, as a noble and unequivocal proof of the good opinion, the affection, and disposition of my country to serve me, and I should be hurt, if, by declining the acceptance of it my refusal should be construed into disrespect or the smallest slight upon the generous intention of the legislature, or that an ostentatious display of disinterestedness of public virtue was the source of refusal.

“On the other hand, it is really my wish to have my mind and my actions, which are the result of reflection as free and independent as the air, that I may be more at liberty (in things which my opportunities and experience have brought me to the knowledge of) to express my sentiments, and, if necessary, to suggest what may occur to me under the fullest conviction that, although my judgment may be arraigned, there will be no suspicion that sinister motives had the smallest influence in the suggestion. Not content then with the bare consciousness of my having in all this navigation business, acted upon the clearest conviction of the political importance of the measure, I would wish that every individual who may hear that it was a favorite plan of mine, may know also, that I had no other motive for promoting it than the advantage of which I conceived it would be productive to the Union at large and to this State in particular, by cementing the eastern

and western territory together, at the same time that it will give vigor and increase to our commerce and be a convenience to our citizens."

At length he determined, in the same letter which should convey his resolution not to retain the shares for his private emolument, to signify his willingness to hold them in trust for such public institution as the Legislature should approve. The following letter conveyed this resolution to the General Assembly through the governor of the State:

OCTOBER, 1785.

"SIR:— Your Excellency having been pleased to transmit me a copy of the act appropriating to my benefit certain shares in the companies for opening the navigation of James and Potomac rivers, I take the liberty of returning to the General Assembly, through your hands, the profound and grateful acknowledgments inspired by so signal a mark of their beneficent intentions towards me. I beg you, sir, to assure them that I am filled on this occasion with every sentiment which can flow from a heart warm with love for my country, sensible to every token of its approbation and affection, and solicitous to testify in every instance a respectful submission to its wishes.

"With these sentiments in my bosom, I need not dwell on the anxiety I feel in being obliged, in this instance, to decline a favor which is rendered no less flattering by the manner in which it is conveyed, than it is affectionate in itself. In explaining this I pass over a comparison of my endeavors in the public service, with the many honorable testimonies of approbation which have already so far overrated, and overpaid them—reciting one consideration only, which supersedes the necessity of recurring to every other.

"When I was first called to the station with which I was

honored during the late conflict for our liberties, to the diffidence which I had so many reasons to feel in accepting it, I thought it my duty to join a firm resolution to shut my hand against every pecuniary recompense. To this resolution I have invariably adhered, and from it (if I had the inclination) I do not consider myself at liberty now to depart.

“Whilst I repeat therefore my fervent acknowledgments to the Legislature for their very kind sentiments and intentions in my favor, and at the same time beg them to be persuaded that a remembrance of this singular proof of their goodness towards me will never cease to cherish returns of the warmest affection and gratitude, I must pray that their act, so far as it has for its object my personal emolument, may not have its effect; but if it should please the General Assembly to permit me to turn the destination of the fund vested in me, from my private emolument to objects of a public nature, it will be my study, in selecting these, to prove the sincerity of my gratitude for the honor conferred upon me, by preferring such as may appear most subservient to the enlightened and patriotic views of the Legislature.”

The wish suggested in this letter immediately received the sanction of the Legislature, and at a subsequent time the trust was executed by conveying the shares respectively to the use of a seminary of learning — which is now called Washington college, and to a university to be established in the District of Columbia, under the auspices of the government.

Washington felt too strong an interest in the success of these works to refuse the presidency of the companies instituted for their completion. In conducting the affairs of the Potomac company, he took an active part; to that

formed for opening the navigation of the James, he could only give his counsel.

While Washington was at Richmond attending to the interests of internal navigation he had been joined by Lafayette, who, since his recent visit to Mount Vernon, had accompanied the commissioners to Fort Schuyler to make a treaty with the Indians, and had assisted on that occasion. He had subsequently made a tour in the eastern States, where he was received with much distinction and he was now on his return to pay a farewell visit to Washington at Mount Vernon.

He remained only a week at Mount Vernon. Washington accompanied him to Annapolis, where Lafayette was honored with a public reception and address by the Legislature of Maryland, and there, on the 30th of November, 1784, these distinguished men took leave of each other. From Annapolis Lafayette proceeded to Trenton, where Congress was then in session, and on Christmas day he embarked at New York for France in the frigate *Nymphe*. The following is an extract from a letter written by Washington to Lafayette on his return to Mount Vernon:

“The peregrination of the day in which I parted from you ended at Marlborough. The next day, bad as it was, I got home before dinner.

“In the moment of separation, upon the road as I travelled, and every hour since, I have felt all that love, respect, and attachment for you, with which length of years, close connection, and your merits have inspired me. I often asked myself, as our carriages separated, whether that was the last sight I ever should have of you? And though I wished to say No, my fears answered Yes. I called to mind the days of my youth, and found they had long since fled to return no more; that I was now descending the hill I had been fifty-two years climbing, and that,

though I was blest with a good constitution, I was of a short-lived family, and might soon expect to be entombed in the mansion of my fathers. These thoughts darkened the shades, and gave a gloom to the picture, and consequently to my prospect of seeing you again. But I will not repine; I have had my day.

“Nothing of importance has occurred since I parted with you. I found my family well, and am now immersed in company; notwithstanding which, I have in haste produced a few more letters to give you the trouble of, rather inclining to commit them to your care, than to pass them through many and unknown hands.”

Among the letters referred to in the above extract was one to the Marchioness de Lafayette and another to her little daughter. In the former he writes: “The Marquis returns to you with all the warmth and ardor of a newly-inspired lover. We restore him to you in good health, crowned with wreaths of love and respect from every part of the Union.”



## CHAPTER II.

### WASHINGTON PRESIDES AT THE FORMATION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

1785-1788.

ON first retiring to Mount Vernon (1785), Washington had devoted his attention to the restoration of his estate to that high condition of order and productiveness which had been maintained under his own personal superintendence previous to the war. During his absence of nine years he had constantly corresponded with his manager and given particular directions respecting its cultivation. But it had suffered much in his absence, and he was determined to renovate it by assiduous care. He gave up the cultivation of tobacco because it had a tendency to exhaust the soil, and planted wheat in its stead, giving attention at the same time to the production of grass, maize, potatoes, and oats, and pursuing the system of rotation in crops now considered so indispensable by intelligent farmers.

When this system was well established he commenced planting and adorning with trees the grounds surrounding the mansion-house. His diary shows that he paid great attention to this object, directing the setting out of a great number and variety of ornamental trees, some of them being obtained in the neighboring woods and others brought from a great distance. He also replenished his gardens, orchards, and green-houses with choice fruits and flowers which were confided to the care of skilful gardeners.

(1527)

Meantime the number of guests entertained at Mount Vernon was ever on the increase. Many were known to have crossed the Atlantic for the sole purpose of visiting the founder of the Republic. Among these was Mrs. Catharine Macauley Graham. By the principles contained in her "History of the Stuarts," this lady had acquired much reputation in republican America and by all was received with marked attention. She was cordially received at Mount Vernon, and, if her letters may be credited, the exalted opinion she had formed of its proprietor was "not diminished by a personal acquaintance with him."

The French military and naval officers, Lafayette, Rochambeau, D'Estaing, and others, gave letters of introduction to be presented to Washington by their friends whenever any of them came to America, and those letters were always duly honored by hospitable attentions to those who bore them. His own compatriots were still more numerous and more assiduous in attention to the retired commander. Officers who had served with him in the old French war and in the Revolution, members of Congress, politicians, and magistrates from distant States, were among the guests at Mount Vernon; so that Washington's time would thus have been completely taken up but for the efficient aid which he received in discharging the duties of hospitality from the ease, urbanity, and excellent management of his accomplished lady.

"His habits," says Mr. Sparks, "were uniform and nearly the same as they had been previously to the war. He arose before the sun and employed himself in his study writing letters or reading till the hour of breakfast. When breakfast was over his horse was ready at the door, and he rode to his farms and gave directions for the day to the managers and laborers. Horses were likewise prepared for his guests whenever they chose to accompany

him, or to amuse themselves by excursions into the country. Returning from his fields and dispatching such business as happened to be on hand, he went again to his study, and continued there till 3 o'clock, when he was summoned to dinner. The remainder of the day and the evening were devoted to company or to recreation in the family circle. At 10 he retired to rest. From these habits he seldom deviated unless compelled to do so by particular circumstances." \*

In a delightful memoir † of his own life and times by Mr. Elkanah Watson, we find the following interesting notice of Washington at home, and we also learn what subject chiefly occupied his thoughts at the time of which we are writing:

"I had feasted my imagination for several days," says Mr. Watson, "on the near prospect of a visit to Mount Vernon — the seat of Washington. No pilgrim ever approached Mecca with deeper enthusiasm. I arrived there on the afternoon of January 23d, 1785. I was the bearer of a letter from General Greene, with another from Colonel Fitzgerald, one of the former aides of Washington, and also the books from Granville Sharpe. Although assured that these credentials would secure me a respectful reception, I felt an unaccountable diffidence as I came into the presence of the great man. I found him at table with Mrs. Washington and his private family, and was received with the native dignity and urbanity so peculiarly combined in the character of a soldier and eminent private gentleman. He soon put me at ease, by unbending in a free and affable conversation.

\* "Life of Washington," p. 389.

† "Men and Times of the Revolution, or Memoirs of Elkanah Watson."

“The cautious reserve which wisdom and policy dictated whilst engaged in rearing the glorious fabric of our independence was evidently the result of consummate prudence and not characteristic of his nature. Although I had frequently seen him in the progress of the Revolution and had corresponded with him from France in 1781 and 1782, this was the first occasion on which I had contemplated him in his private relations. I observed a peculiarity in his *smile* which seemed to illuminate his eye; his whole countenance beamed with intelligence, while it commanded confidence and respect. The gentleman who had accompanied me from Alexandria left in the evening, and I remained alone in the enjoyment of the society of Washington for two of the richest days of my life. I saw him reaping the reward of his illustrious deeds in the quiet shade of his beloved retirement. He was at the matured age of fifty-three. Alexander died before he reached that period of life and he had immortalized his name. How much stronger and nobler the claims of Washington to immortality! In the impulses of mad, selfish ambition, Alexander acquired fame by wading to the conquest of the world through seas of blood. Washington, on the contrary, was parsimonious of the blood of his countrymen, stood forth the pure and virtuous champion of their rights, and formed for them, not himself, a mighty empire.

“To have communed with such a man in the bosom of his family I shall always regard as one of the highest privileges and most cherished incidents of my life. I found him kind and benignant in the domestic circle, revered and beloved by all around him, agreeably social, without ostentation; delighting in anecdote and adventures, without assumption; his domestic arrangements harmonious and systematic. His servants seemed to watch his eye, and to anticipate his every wish; hence a look was equivalent

to a command. His servant Billy, the faithful companion of his military career, was always at his side. Smiling content animated and beamed on every countenance in his presence.

“The first evening I spent under the wing of his hospitality we sat a full hour at table, by ourselves, without the least interruption, after the family had retired. I was extremely oppressed with a severe cold and excessive coughing, contracted from the exposure of a harsh winter journey. He pressed me to use some remedies, but I declined doing so. As usual after retiring my cough increased. When some time had elapsed the door of my room was gently opened, and on drawing my bed-curtains, to my utter astonishment, I beheld Washington himself standing at my bedside with a bowl of hot tea in his hand. I was mortified and distressed beyond expression. This little incident, occurring in common life with an ordinary man would not have been noticed, but as a trait of the benevolence and the private virtue of Washington it deserves to be recorded.

“He modestly waived all allusions to the events in which he had acted so glorious and conspicuous a part. Much of his conversation had reference to the interior country and to the opening of the navigation of the Potomac, by canals and locks at the Seneca, the Great, and the Little Falls. His mind appeared to be deeply absorbed in that object, then in earnest contemplation. He allowed me to take minutes from his former journal on this subject, of which the following is a partial summary:

“‘The stock of the company is divided into 500 shares at £50 sterling each. The canal company has been incorporated by both Maryland and Virginia.’ Washington had accepted the presidency of it. ‘The preliminary preparations are in full train, to commence operations in the ensu-



ing spring, not only to remove the obstacles in the Potomac to a boat navigation from Georgetown to Fort Cumberland, a distance of 190 miles, but to the ultimate construction of a canal to Lake Erie, which is intended not only to give a direction to the fur trade from Detroit to Alexandria, but to attract the eventual trade of the country north of the Ohio which now slumbers in a state of nature.' This scheme was worthy of the comprehensive mind of Washington.

"To demonstrate the practicability and the policy of diverting the trade of the immense interior world yet unexplored to the Atlantic cities, especially in view of the idea that the Mississippi would be opened by Spain, was his constant and favorite theme. To elucidate the probability, also, that the Detroit fur trade would take this direction, he produced the following estimates, which I copied in his presence and with his aid from the original manuscript:

"From Detroit, at the head of Lake Erie, via Fort Pitt (now Pittsburg) and Fort Cumberland, to the head of the

	Miles.
Potomac, is. ....	607
To Richmond. ....	840
To Philadelphia. ....	741
To Albany. ....	943
To Montreal. ....	955

"Thus it appeared that Alexandria is 348 miles nearer Detroit than Montreal, with only two carrying places of about forty miles.

"Since my travels in 1779 I had been deeply and constantly impressed with the importance of constructing canals to connect the various waters of America. This

conviction was confirmed under the examination of numerous canals of Europe, and travelling extensively on several of them. Hearing little else for two days from the persuasive tongue of this great man I was, I confess, completely under the influence of the canal mania, and it enkindled all my enthusiasm."

Among the objects which claimed the attention of Washington in his retirement was a change in the constitution of the Cincinnati. This society had been formed in May, 1783, when the army was encamped at Newburg. The prospect of speedily separating from each other had suggested the plan of forming an association among the officers to serve as a tie of brotherhood for the future.

This idea was suggested by General Knox and was matured in a meeting composed of the generals, and of deputies from the regiments, at which Major-General Steuben presided. An agreement was then entered into by which the officers were to constitute themselves into one society of friends, to endure as long as they should endure, or any of their eldest male posterity, and, in failure thereof, any collateral branches who might be judged worthy of becoming its supporters and members, were to be admitted into it. To mark their veneration for that celebrated Roman between whose situation and their own they found some similitude, they were to be denominated "The Society of the Cincinnati." Individuals of the respective States, distinguished for their patriotism and abilities, might be admitted as honorary members for life, provided their numbers should at no time exceed a ratio of one to four.

The society was to be designated by a medal of gold representing the American eagle bearing on its breast the devices of the order, which was to be suspended by a ribbon of deep blue edged with white, descriptive of the

union of America and France. To the ministers who had represented the King of France at Philadelphia, to the admirals who had commanded in the American seas, to the Count de Rochambeau and the generals and colonels of the French troops who had served in the United States, the insignia of the order were to be presented and they were to be invited to consider themselves as members of the society, at the head of which the Commander-in-Chief was respectfully solicited to place his name. An incessant attention, on the part of the members, to the preservation of the exalted rights and liberties of human nature for which they had fought and bled, and an unalterable determination to promote and cherish between the respective States union and national honor, were declared to be the immutable principles of the society. Its objects were to perpetuate the remembrance of the American revolution, as well as cordial affection and the spirit of brotherly kindness among the officers, and to extend acts of beneficence to those officers and their families whose situation might require assistance. To give effect to the charitable object of the institution a common fund was to be created by the deposit of one month's pay on the part of every officer becoming a member, the product of which fund, after defraying certain necessary charges, was to be sacredly appropriated to this humane purpose.

The military gentlemen of each State were to constitute a distinct society, deputies from which were to assemble triennially in order to form a general meeting for the regulation of general concerns.

Without encountering any open opposition this institution was carried into complete effect, and its honors were sought, especially by the foreign officers, with great avidity. But soon after it was organized those jealousies, which in its first moments had been concealed, burst forth

into open view. In October, 1783, a pamphlet was published by Mr. Burk of South Carolina, for the purpose of rousing the apprehensions of the public, and of directing its resentments against the society. In this work it was denounced as an attempt to form an order of nobility. The hereditary feature of the constitution and the power of conferring its honors on distinguished personages, not descended from the officers of the army, were considered particularly inconsistent with the genius of our republican institutions. In Massachusetts the subject was even taken up by the Legislature, and it was well understood that, in Congress, the society was viewed with secret disapprobation.

It was impossible for Washington to view with indifference this state of the public feeling. Bound to the officers of his army by the strictest ties of esteem and affection, conscious of their merits and assured of their attachment to his person, he was alive to everything which might affect their reputation or their interests. However innocent the institution might be in itself or however laudable its real objects, if the impression it made on the public mind was such as to draw a line of distinction between the military men of America and their fellow-citizens, he was earnest in his wishes to adopt such measures as would efface that impression. However ill founded the public prejudices might be he thought this a case in which they ought to be respected, and, if it should be found impracticable to convince the people that their fears were misplaced, he was disposed "to yield to them in a degree, and not to suffer that which was intended for the best of purposes to produce a bad one."

A general meeting was to be held in Philadelphia in May, 1784, and, in the meantime, he had been appointed the temporary president.

Washington was too much in the habit of considering subjects of difficulty in various points of view, and of deciding on them with coolness and deliberation, to permit his affections to influence his judgment. The most exact inquiries, assiduously made into the true state of the public mind, resulted in a conviction that opinions unfriendly to the institution, in its actual form, were extensively entertained, and that those opinions were founded, not in hostility to the late army, but in real apprehensions for equal liberty.

A wise and necessary policy required, he thought, the removal of these apprehensions, and, at the general meeting in May, the hereditary principle, and the power of adopting honorary members, were relinquished. The result demonstrated the propriety of this alteration. Although a few, who always perceive most danger where none exists, and the visionaries then abounding in Europe, continued their prophetic denunciations against the order, America dismissed her fears, and, notwithstanding the refusal of several of the State societies to adopt the measures recommended by the general meeting, the members of the Cincinnati were received as brethren into the bosom of their country.\*

While Washington was engaged in the cultivation of his extensive estate his thoughts were by no means withdrawn from the political concerns of the country, which at this time were assuming rather an ominous aspect. His correspondence evinces that his advice was much sought for by the leading men in the country, and that his opinions on the aspect of the public affairs were freely given. The want of power in the central government, arising from the defects of the old confederation, was becoming more and

\* Marshall, "Life of Washington."





WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL TO HIS OFFICERS.



more apparent, and the evils arising from this want of power were pressing severely on every side. While the war lasted the external pressure held the government together, but on the return of peace its dissolution had become imminent. Large debts had been contracted to pay the expenses of the war, and, although an attempt had been made to establish a general system of revenue from duties on imports, individual States had obstructed the prosecution of this plan, and the government had found itself unable to raise the funds necessary to pay the interest on the public debt. It had, in fact, no power to regulate commerce or collect a revenue. This made it incapable of executing treaties, fulfilling its foreign engagements, or causing itself to be respected by foreign nations. While at home its weakness was disgusting the public creditors and raising a clamor of discontent and disaffection on every side. An alarming crisis was rapidly approaching.

By the enlightened friends of republican government, this gloomy state of things was viewed with deep chagrin. Many became apprehensive that those plans from which so much happiness to the human race had been anticipated would produce only real misery, and would maintain but a short and a turbulent existence. Meanwhile, the wise and thinking part of the community, who could trace evils to their source, labored unceasingly to inculcate opinions favorable to the incorporation of some principles into the political system which might correct the obvious vices, without endangering the free spirit of the existing institutions.

While the advocates for union were exerting themselves to impress its necessity on the public mind, measures were taken in Virginia, which, though originating in different views, terminated in a proposition for a general convention to revise the state of the Union.

To form a compact relative to the navigation of the rivers Potomac and Pocomoke, and of part of Chesapeake bay, commissioners were appointed by the Legislatures of Virginia and Maryland, who assembled in Alexandria in March, 1785. While at Mount Vernon on a visit\* they agreed to propose to their respective governments the appointment of other commissioners, with power to make conjoint arrangements, to which the assent of Congress was to be solicited, for maintaining a naval force in the Chesapeake, and to establish a tariff of duties on imports to which the laws of both States should conform. When these propositions received the assent of the Legislature of Virginia an additional resolution was passed, directing that which respected the duties on imports to be communicated to all the States in the Union, who were invited to send deputies to the meeting.

On the 21st of January, 1786, a few days after the passage of these resolutions, another was adopted appointing Edmund Randolph, James Madison, Walter Jones, St. George Tucker, and Meriwether Smith, commissioners, "who were to meet such as might be appointed by the other States in the Union, at a time and place to be agreed on, to take into consideration the trade of the United States; to examine the relative situation and trade of the said States; to consider how far a uniform system in their commercial relations may be necessary to their common interest and their permanent harmony, and to report to the several States such an act relative to this great object, as, when unanimously ratified by them, will enable the United

\* It is a very interesting fact that the proposition in which the Convention that formed the Constitution originated should have been made at Mount Vernon, in Washington's presence, if not by himself. As Faneuil Hall is called the Cradle of Liberty, Mount Vernon may be regarded as the Cradle of the Constitution.

States in Congress assembled effectually to provide for the same."

In the circular letter transmitting these resolutions to the respective States, Annapolis, in Maryland, was proposed as the place, and the ensuing September (1786) as the time of meeting.

Before the arrival of the period at which these commissioners were to assemble the idea was carried by those who saw and deplored the complicated calamities which flowed from the inefficacy of the general government, much further than was avowed by the resolution of Virginia. "Although," said Mr. Jay, one of the most conspicuous patriots of the Revolution, in a letter to Washington, dated the 16th of March, 1786, "you have wisely retired from public employments, and calmly view, from the temple of fame, the various exertions of that sovereignty and independence which Providence has enabled you to be so greatly and gloriously instrumental in securing to your country, yet I am persuaded you cannot view them with the eye of an unconcerned spectator.

"Experience has pointed out errors in our national government which call for correction, and which threaten to blast the fruit we expected from our tree of liberty. The convention proposed by Virginia may do some good, and would perhaps do more, if it comprehended more objects. An opinion begins to prevail that a general convention for revising the articles of confederation would be expedient. Whether the people are yet ripe for such a measure, or whether the system proposed to be attained by it is only to be expected from calamity and commotion, is difficult to ascertain.

"I think we are in a delicate situation, and a variety of considerations and circumstances give me uneasiness. It is in contemplation to take measures for forming a general



convention. The plan is not matured. If it should be well connected and take effect, I am fervent in my wishes that it may comport with the line of life you have marked out for yourself to favor your country with your counsels on such an important and single occasion. I suggest this merely as a hint for consideration."

To the patriots who accomplished the great revolution which gave to the American people a national government capable of maintaining the union of the States and of preserving republican liberty, we must ever feel grateful and admire and honor them for their services during that arduous and doubtful struggle which terminated in the triumph of human reason and the establishment of a free government. To us who were not actors in those busy scenes, but who enjoy the fruits of the labor without having participated in the toils or the fears of the patriots who achieved such glorious results, the sentiments entertained by the most enlightened and virtuous of America at that eventful period cannot be uninteresting.

"Our affairs," said Mr. Jay, in a letter of the 27th of June (1786), "seem to lead to some crisis, some revolution—something that I cannot foresee or conjecture. I am uneasy and apprehensive, more so than during the war. Then, we had a fixed object and, though the means and time of obtaining it were often problematical, yet I did firmly believe that we should ultimately succeed, because I did firmly believe that justice was with us. The case is now altered, we are going and doing wrong and therefore I look forward to evils and calamities, but without being able to guess at the instrument, nature, or measure of them.

"That we shall again recover and things again go well, I have no doubt. Such a variety of circumstances would not, almost miraculously, have combined to liberate and

make us a nation for transient and unimportant purposes. I therefore believe we are yet to become a great and respectable people, but when or how, only the spirit of prophecy can discern.

“There doubtless is much reason to think and to say that we are woefully, and, in many instances, wickedly misled. Private rage for property suppresses public considerations, and personal rather than national interests have become the great objects of attention. Representative bodies will ever be faithful copies of their originals, and generally exhibit a checkered assemblage of virtue and vice, of abilities and weakness. The mass of men are neither wise nor good, and the virtue, like the other resources of a country, can only be drawn to a point by strong circumstances ably managed or strong governments ably administered. New governments have not the aid of habit and hereditary respect, and, being generally the result of preceding tumult and confusion, do not immediately acquire stability or strength. Besides, in times of commotion, some men will gain confidence and importance who merit neither, and who, like political mountebanks, are less solicitous about the health of the credulous crowd than about making the most of their nostrums and prescriptions.

“What I most fear is that the better kind of people (by which I mean the people who are orderly and industrious, who are content with their situations, and not uneasy in their circumstances) will be led by the insecurity of property, the loss of confidence in their rulers, and the want of public faith and rectitude, to consider the charms of liberty as imaginary and delusive. A state of uncertainty and fluctuation must disgust and alarm such men and prepare their minds for almost any change that may promise them quiet and security.”

To this interesting letter Washington made the follow-

ing reply: "Your sentiments, that our affairs are drawing rapidly to a crisis, accord with my own. What the event will be, is also beyond the reach of my foresight. We have errors to correct; we have probably had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our confederation. Experience has taught us that men will not adopt and carry into execution measures the best calculated for their own good without the intervention of coercive power. I do not conceive we can exist long as a nation, without lodging somewhere a power which will pervade the whole Union in as energetic a manner as the authority of the State governments extends over the several States. To be fearful of investing Congress, constituted as that body is with ample authorities for national purposes, appears to me the very climax of popular absurdity and madness. Could Congress exert them for the detriment of the people, without injuring themselves in an equal or greater proportion? Are not their interests inseparably connected with those of their constituents? By the rotation of appointment, must they not mingle frequently with the mass of citizens? Is it not rather to be apprehended, if they were possessed of the powers before described, that the individual members would be induced to use them, on many occasions, very timidly and inefficaciously, for fear of losing their popularity and future election? We must take human nature as we find it; perfection falls not to the share of mortals. Many are of opinion that Congress have too frequently made use of the suppliant humble tone of requisition, in applications to the States, when they had a right to assert their imperial dignity, and command obedience. Be that as it may, requisitions are a perfect nullity, where thirteen sovereign, independent, disunited States are in the habit of discussing, and refusing or complying with them at their option. Requisitions are actually little better than

a jest and a by-word throughout the land. If you tell the Legislatures they have violated the treaty of peace, and invaded the prerogatives of the confederacy, they will laugh in your face. What then is to be done? Things cannot go on in the same train forever. It is much to be feared, as you observe, that the better kind of people, being disgusted with these circumstances, will have their minds prepared for any revolution whatever. We are apt to run from one extreme into another. To anticipate and prevent disastrous contingencies would be the part of wisdom and patriotism.

“What astonishing changes a few years are capable of producing! I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking; thence to acting is often but a single step. But how irrevocable and tremendous! what a triumph for our enemies to verify their predictions! what a triumph for the advocates of despotism, to find that we are incapable of governing ourselves, and that systems founded on the basis of equal liberty are merely ideal and fallacious! Would to God that wise measures may be taken in time to avert the consequences we have but too much reason to apprehend.

“Retired as I am from the world, I frankly acknowledge I cannot feel myself an unconcerned spectator. Yet, having happily assisted in bringing the ship into port, and having been fairly discharged, it is not my business to embark again on a sea of troubles.

“Nor could it be expected that my sentiments and opinions would have much weight on the minds of my countrymen. They have been neglected, though given as a last legacy in the most solemn manner. I had then perhaps some claims to public attention. I consider myself as having none at present.”

The convention at Annapolis was attended by commissioners from only six States — New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. These, after appointing Mr. Dickinson their chairman, proceeded to discuss the objects for which they had convened. Perceiving that more ample powers would be required to effect the beneficial purposes which they contemplated, and hoping to procure a representation from a greater number of States, the convention determined to rise without coming to any specific resolutions on the particular subject which had been referred to them. Previous to their adjournment, however, they agreed on a report to be made to their respective States, in which they represented the necessity of extending the revision of the Federal system to all its defects, and recommended that deputies for that purpose be appointed by the several Legislatures, to meet in convention in the city of Philadelphia on the second day of the ensuing May (1787).

The reasons for preferring a convention to a discussion of this subject in Congress, were stated to be, “that in the latter body it might be too much interrupted by the ordinary business before them and would, besides, be deprived of the valuable counsels of sundry individuals who were disqualified by the constitution or laws of particular States or by peculiar circumstances from a seat in that assembly.”

A copy of this report was transmitted to Congress in a letter from the chairman, stating the inefficacy of the Federal government and the necessity of devising such further provisions as would render it adequate to the exigencies of the Union.

On receiving this report, the Legislature of Virginia (1786) passed an act for the appointment of deputies to meet such as might be appointed by other States, to assemble in convention at Philadelphia at the time and for



the purposes specified in the recommendation from the convention which had met at Annapolis.

When the plan of a convention was thus ripened and its meeting appointed to be at Philadelphia in May, 1787, Mr. Madison communicated to Washington the intention of that State to elect him one of her representatives on this important occasion. He explicitly declined being a candidate, yet the Legislature placed him at the head of her delegation, in the hope that mature reflection would induce him to attend upon the service. The governor of the State, Mr. Randolph, informed him of his appointment by the following letter: "By the inclosed act you will readily discover that the assembly are alarmed at the storms which threaten the United States. What our enemies have foretold seems to be hastening to its accomplishment, and cannot be frustrated but by an instantaneous, zealous, and steady union among the friends of the Federal government. To you I need not press our present dangers. The inefficacy of Congress you have often felt in your official character, the increasing languor of our associated republics you hourly see; and a dissolution would be, I know, to you a source of the deepest mortification. I freely then entreat you to accept the unanimous appointment of the General Assembly to the convention at Philadelphia. For the gloomy prospect still admits one ray of hope—that those who began, carried on, and consummated the Revolution, can yet restore America from the impending ruin."

"Sensible as I am," said Washington in his answer, "of the honor conferred on me by the General Assembly of this commonwealth, in appointing me one of the deputies to a convention proposed to be held in the city of Philadelphia in May next, for the purpose of revising the Federal constitution, and desirous as I am on all occasions

of testifying a ready obedience to the calls of my country, yet, sir, there exist at this moment circumstances which I am persuaded will render this fresh instance of confidence incompatible with other measures which I had previously adopted and from which, seeing little prospect of disengaging myself, it would be disingenuous not to express a wish that some other character, on whom greater reliance can be had, may be substituted in my place, the probability of my nonattendance being too great to continue my appointment.

“As no mind can be more deeply impressed than mine is with the critical situation of our affairs, resulting in a great measure from the want of efficient powers in the Federal head and due respect to its ordinances, so consequently those who do engage in the important business of removing these defects will carry with them every good wish of mine, which the best dispositions toward their obtainment can bestow.”

The governor declined the acceptance of his resignation of the appointment and begged him to suspend his determination until the approach of the period of the meeting of the convention, that his final judgment might be the result of a full acquaintance with all circumstances.

Thus situated, Washington reviewed the subject that he might, upon thorough deliberation, make the decision which duty and patriotism enjoined. He had, by a circular letter to the State societies, declined being re-elected the president of the Cincinnati, and had announced that he should not attend their general meeting at Philadelphia in the next May, and he apprehended that if he attended the convention at the time and place of their meeting he should give offense to all the officers of the late army who composed this body. He was under apprehension that the States would not be generally represented on this occasion,

and that a failure in the plan would diminish the personal influence of those who engaged in it. Some of his confidential friends were of opinion that the occasion did not require his interposition and that he ought to reserve himself for a state of things which would unequivocally demand his agency and influence. Even on the supposition that the plan should succeed they thought that he ought not to engage in it, because his having been in convention would oblige him to make exertions to carry the measures that body might recommend into effect, and would necessarily "sweep him into the tide of public affairs." His own experience since the close of the Revolutionary War created in his mind serious doubts whether the respective States would quietly adopt any system calculated to give stability and vigor to the national government. "As we could not," to use his own language, "remain quiet more than three or four years in times of peace under the constitutions of our own choosing, which were believed in many States to have been formed with deliberation and wisdom, I see little prospect either of our agreeing on any other, or that we should remain long satisfied under it, if we could. Yet I would wish anything and everything essayed to prevent the effusion of blood and to divert the humiliating and contemptible figure we are about to make in the annals of mankind."

These considerations operated powerfully to confirm him in the determination first formed, not to attend the convention.

On the other hand he realized the greatness of the emergency. The confederation was universally considered as a nullity. The advice of a convention, composed of respectable characters from every part of the Union, would probably have great influence with the community, whether

it should be to amend the articles of the old government or to form a new constitution.

Amidst the various sentiments which at this time prevailed respecting the state of public affairs, many entertained the supposition that the "times must be worse before they could be better," and that the American people could be induced to establish an efficient and liberal national government only by the scourge of anarchy. Some seemed to think that the experiment of a republican government in America had already failed and that one more energetic would soon by violence be introduced. Washington entertained some apprehension that his declining to attend the convention would be considered as a dereliction of republican principles.

While he was balancing these opposite circumstances in his mind the insurrection of Massachusetts\* occurred,

\*The occasion and effect of this insurrection, commonly called Shay's Rebellion, are thus described by a recent writer. The jealousy felt toward the statesmen of the Republic, or toward the upper by the middle class — if the terms may be allowed — was likely to operate fatally in marring the project of a Constitution, and rendering any innovation for the purpose impracticable; since the dissentient States were resolved not to choose delegates, or accede to the desire of Virginia.

These democratic opinions of the middle classes, however, and the resolutions founded upon them, were eventually shaken and overturned by the extreme to which they were carried by the lower orders. These were no sooner inspired by the same political feelings, than, after their fashion, they rose in insurrection; bade defiance not only to Congress, but to the State authorities themselves; and, collecting in armed bands, threatened to effect a serious revolution by taking law and property into their own hands. The New England States, principally Massachusetts, were the scenes of these disorders, which took place toward the close of 1786.

A body of 2,000 men, assembled in the northwestern region of the State, chose one of their number, Daniel Shay, for leader. They asked for suspension of taxes, and the remission of paper

which turned the scale of opinion in favor of his joining the convention. He viewed this event as awfully alarming. "For God's sake, tell me," said he, in a letter to Colonel Humphreys, "what is the cause of all these commotions? Do they proceed from licentiousness, British influence disseminated by the Tories, or real grievances which admit of redress? If the latter, why was redress delayed until the public mind had become so much agitated? If the former, why are not the powers of the government tried at once? It is as well to be without as not to exercise them."

To General Knox and other friends similar apprehensions were expressed. "I feel infinitely more than I can express to you for the disorders which have arisen in these

money; but it was known that their favorite scheme was that of an agrarian law—a general division of property. Respectable classes were, of course, thrown into alarm; Congress recovered a portion of that vigor which had marked it during the war; troops were dispatched, under General Lincoln and other officers, against the insurgents; and the citizens of the New England towns forgot their late jealousy of the military so far as to join them in the task of putting down their domestic foes. Funds were raised by private subscription to supply the emptiness of the public treasury; and an efficient force was enabled to march, in the midst of winter, against the insurgents, who were soon dispersed and reduced.

The rebellion thus suppressed was productive of the most salutary result. The middle classes, terrified at the exaggeration of their own doctrines, and at the risk of exciting the mob as supporters, rallied universally to the support of Congress. Jealousy of those above was counterbalanced by fear of those below; and the majority of the State Legislatures was brought to coincide with the views of the Federal statesmen. Convinced by late experience of the necessity of an established and general government, even for purposes of domestic security, the hitherto refractory States named, without hesitation, their delegates to the appointed convention for forming a constitution. Rhode Island alone refused.



States. Good God! who besides a Tory could have foreseen, or a Briton have predicted them? I do assure you that even at this moment, when I reflect upon the present aspect of our affairs, it seems to me like the visions of a dream. My mind can scarcely realize it as a thing in actual existence, so strange, so wonderful, does it appear to me. In this, as in most other matters, we are too slow. When this spirit first dawned it might probably have been easily checked, but it is scarcely within the reach of human ken, at this moment, to say when, where, or how it will terminate. There are combustibles in every State to which a spark might set fire. In bewailing, which I have often done with the keenest sorrow, the death of our much-lamented friend, General Greene, I have accompanied my regrets of late with a query, whether he would not have preferred such an exit to the scenes which it is more than probable many of his compatriots may live to bemoan. \* \* \*

“ You talk, my good sir, of employing influence to appease the present tumults in Massachusetts. I know not where that influence is to be found, nor if attainable, that it would be a proper remedy for these disorders. Influence is not government. Let us have a government by which our lives, liberties, and properties will be secured, or let us know the worst at once. Under these impressions my humble opinion is that there is a call for decision. Know then precisely what the insurgents aim at. If they have real grievances redress them if possible, or acknowledge the justice of them and your inability to do it in the present moment. If they have not, employ the force of the government against them at once. If this is inadequate all will be convinced that the superstructure is bad or wants support. To be more exposed in the eyes of the world, and more contemptible than we already are, is

hardly possible. To delay one or the other of these expedients is to exasperate on the one hand or to give confidence on the other, and will add to their numbers, for, like snowballs, such bodies increase by every movement, unless there is something in the way to obstruct and crumble them before their weight is too great and irresistible.

“These are my sentiments. Precedents are dangerous things. Let the reins of government then be braced and held with a steady hand, and every violation of the constitution be reprehended. If defective, let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled upon while it has an existence.”

Colonel Humphreys having intimated by letter his apprehension that civil discord was near, in which event he would be obliged to act a public part, or to leave the continent — “It is,” said Washington in reply, “with the deepest and most heartfelt concern I perceive, by some late paragraphs extracted from the Boston papers, that the insurgents of Massachusetts, far from being satisfied with the redress offered by their General Court, are still acting in open violation of law and government, and have obliged the chief magistrate, in a decided tone, to call upon the militia of the State to support the constitution.

“What, gracious God, is man, that there should be such inconsistency and perfidiousness in his conduct! It is but the other day that we were shedding our blood to obtain the constitutions under which we live — constitutions of our own choice and making — and now we are unsheathing the sword to overturn them. The thing is so unaccountable that I hardly know how to realize it, or to persuade myself that I am not under the illusion of a dream. My mind, previous to the receipt of your letter of the first ultimo, had often been agitated by a thought similar to the

one you expressed respecting a friend of yours, but heaven forbid that a crisis should come when he shall be driven to the necessity of making a choice of either of the alternatives there mentioned."

Having learned that the States had generally elected their representatives to the convention, and Congress having given its sanction to it, he on the 28th of March communicated to the governor of Virginia his consent to act as one of the delegates of his State on this important occasion.

When this determination was formed Washington at once commenced his preparations to leave Mount Vernon at an early day, so that he might be able to be present at the meeting of the Cincinnati; but on the 26th of April (1787) he received intelligence by an express that his mother and sister were dangerously ill at Fredericksburg. He immediately set off for that place, and the detention thus occasioned prevented his meeting the Cincinnati. After remaining three days at Fredericksburg, his mother and sister being partially recovered, he returned to Mount Vernon, and was enabled to complete his preparations for leaving home in season to arrive in Philadelphia on the 13th of May, the day before the opening of the convention.\*

Public honors had awaited him everywhere on his route. At Chester he was met by General Mifflin, then speaker of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, and several officers of the army and other public characters who accompanied him to Gray's Ferry, where his former escort, the "First Troop" of Philadelphia, were waiting to conduct him to the city. On his arrival he paid his first visit to Dr. Franklin, president of the State of Pennsylvania, who had also been elected a member of the convention.

\* Sparks, "Writings of Washington."

On the next day (May 14, 1787), the convention assembled which was to accomplish one of the most splendid works that ever was achieved by human wisdom. Several days, however, elapsed before a quorum of members could be formed. When the moment for commencing the organization of the convention arrived, Robert Morris, on behalf of the Pennsylvania delegation, nominated Washington as its president. John Rutledge of South Carolina, future chief justice of the United States, seconded the nomination, remarking at the same time that the presence of General Washington forbade any observations on the occasion which might not be proper. He was elected by a unanimous vote. By this act the convention did but fulfil the wishes of the whole nation. A crisis had arrived in which all eyes were turned to the Great Founder for deliverance. To use his own language in a letter written to Mr. Jefferson a few days later (May 30, 1787), "That something is necessary none will deny, for the general government, if it can be called a government, is shaken to its foundation and liable to be overturned by every blast. In a word, it is at an end, and unless a remedy is soon applied anarchy and confusion will inevitably ensue."

Among the members of the convention were many men of exalted character and signal abilities. New York sent Alexander Hamilton, himself a host. No member was better fitted for the work or exerted a more important influence in perfecting it. Madison was one of the delegates from Virginia, whose pen was subsequently exerted, in connection with those of Hamilton and Jay in defending and expounding the constitution to the people in the memorable papers of the "Federalist." Massachusetts sent Nathaniel Gorham and Rufus King; New Hampshire, John Langdon and Nicholas Gilman; Pennsylvania counted in her numerous delegates Franklin, Mifflin, James

Wilson, Robert Morris, and Gouverneur Morris, with others whose historical names are less distinguished for ability and eloquence, though not less for integrity and patriotism. South Carolina sent John Rutledge, her former governor, one of the ablest and purest men then living, and destined to preside over the supreme judiciary of the Union. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, one of the bravest of the revolutionary generals, and the future ambassador to France, was also among the delegates of South Carolina. Among the other names on the roll of the convention, we recognize those of another Pinckney, famed for eloquence; Roger Sherman, a veteran statesman and signer of the Declaration of Independence; William Livingston, afterwards Governor of New Jersey, friend and correspondent of Washington, and Doctor Hugh Williamson of North Carolina, an early patriot, who had assisted Franklin in detecting the intrigues of Hutchinson and Oliver.

It would fill far too much space to enumerate all the members of the convention, or even to glance at their respective titles, already earned by public service, to the confidence of their countrymen.

"It was a most fortunate thing for America," says a recent writer,\* "that the Revolutionary age, with its hardships, its trials, and its mistakes, had formed a body of statesmen capable of framing for it a durable constitution. The leading persons in the convention which formed the constitution had been actors either in civil or military life in the scenes of the Revolution. In those scenes their characters as American statesmen had been formed. When the condition of the country had fully revealed the incapacity of the government to provide for its wants,

\* George Ticknor Curtis, "History of the Constitution of the United States."



these men were naturally looked to to construct a system which would save it from anarchy. And their great capacities, their high disinterested purposes, their freedom from all fanaticism and illiberality, and their earnest, unconquerable faith in the destiny of the country, enabled them to found that government which now upholds and protects the whole fabric of liberty in the States of this Union."

The convention remained in session four months, and their industry and devotion to their important work is amply testified by the fact that they sat from five to seven hours a day. It was a most imposing assemblage. "The severe, unchanging presence of Washington," says the writer last quoted, "presided over all. The chivalrous sincerity and disinterestedness of Hamilton pervaded the assembly with all the power of his fascinating manners. The flashing eloquence of Gouverneur Morris recalled the dangers of anarchy, which must be accepted as the alternative of an abortive experiment. The calm, clear, statesmanlike views of Madison, the searching and profound expositions of King, the prudent influence of Franklin, at length ruled the hour."

On the 17th of September, 1787, the constitution was signed by all the members present, except Edmund Randolph, the governor of Virginia; George Mason and Elbridge Gerry; and it was then forwarded with a letter to Congress. By that assembly it was sent to the State Legislatures to be submitted in each State to a convention of delegates, to be chosen by the people, for approval or rejection. As the State Legislatures assembled at different times, nearly a year would elapse before the result could be known.

Immediately after the convention had ended its labors, Washington returned to Mount Vernon to resume his agricultural pursuits and to watch with intense interest the

slow process of ratifying the constitution by the several States. His correspondence with Hamilton, Madison, Jay, Wilson, Governor Langdon of New Hampshire, Generals Knox and Lincoln, and Governor Randolph, at this time, shows that the subject occupied a great share of his attention, and that he was extremely anxious that the constitution should be adopted by all the States.

In a letter to Lafayette (7th of February, 1788), he says: "As to my sentiments with respect to the merits of the new constitution, I will disclose them without reserve, although, by passing through the post-offices they should become known to all the world; for, in truth, I have nothing to conceal on that subject. It appears to me, then, little short of a miracle that the delegates from so many States, different from each other, as you know, in their manners, circumstances, and prejudices, should unite in forming a system of national government so little liable to well-founded objections. Nor am I yet such an enthusiastic, partial, or indiscriminating admirer of it as not to perceive it is tinctured with some real though not radical defects. The limits of a letter would not suffer me to go fully into an examination of them; nor would the discussion be entertaining or profitable. I therefore forbear to touch upon it. With regard to the two great points, the pivots upon which the whole machine must move, my creed is simply —

"First, That the general government is not invested with more powers than are indispensably necessary to perform the functions of a good government, and, consequently, that no objection ought to be made against the quantity of power delegated to it.

"Secondly, That these powers, as the appointment of all rulers will forever arise from, and at short stated intervals recur to the free suffrage of the people, are so distrib-

uted among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches in to which the general government is arranged that it can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarchy, an oligarchy, an aristocracy, or any other despotic or oppressive form so long as there shall remain any virtue in the body of the people.

“ I would not be understood, my dear Marquis, to speak of consequences which may be produced in the revolution of ages, by corruption of morals, profligacy of manners, and listlessness in the preservation of the natural and unalienable rights of mankind, nor of the successful usurpations that may be established at such an unpropitious juncture upon the ruins of liberty, however providentially guarded and secured, as these are contingencies against which no human prudence can effectually provide. It will at least be a recommendation to the proposed constitution that it is provided with more checks and barriers against the introduction of tyranny and those of a nature less liable to be surmounted than any government hitherto instituted among mortals. We are not to expect perfection in this world: but mankind, in modern times, have apparently made some progress in the science of government. Should that which is now offered to the people of America be found an experiment less perfect than it can be made, a constitutional door is left open for its amelioration.”

A letter of Mr. Jefferson, written to one of his friends while the constitution was under consideration, gives some interesting particulars respecting its reception and the opinions of some of the States and leaders in regard to it:

“ The constitution,” he says, “ has been received with very general enthusiasm; the bulk of the people are eager to adopt it. In the eastern States the printers will print nothing against it unless the writer subscribes his name. Massachusetts and Connecticut have called conventions

in January to consider it. In New York there is a division; the governor, Clinton, is known to be hostile. Jersey, it is thought, will accept; Pennsylvania is divided, and all the bitterness of her factions has been kindled anew. But the party in favor of it is the strongest, both in and out of the Legislature. This is the party anciently of Morris, Wilson, etc. \* \* \* Delaware will do what Pennsylvania shall do. Maryland is thought favorable to it, yet it is supposed that Chase and Paca will oppose it. As to Virginia, two of her delegates, in the first place, refused to sign it; these were Randolph, the governor, and George Mason. Besides these, Henry, Harrison, Nelson, and the Lees are against it. General Washington will be for it, but it is not in his character to exert himself much in the case. Madison will be its main pillar," etc.

With respect to Washington, Jefferson was mistaken. His letters show that he did exert himself very zealously to remove the objections of recusant States and statesmen, especially the Virginia leaders who were all numbered among his personal friends.

The following letter to Jonathan Trumbull, of Connecticut, written at Mount Vernon on the 20th of July, 1788, when the final event was pretty certain, evinces the lively interest he took in the progress of affairs and the deep religious feeling of thankfulness with which, as usual, he recognized the hand of Providence in the result:

"You will have perceived from the public papers," he writes, "that I was not erroneous in my calculation, that the constitution would be accepted by the convention of this State. The majority, it is true, was small and the minority respectable in many points of view. But the great part of the minority here, as in most other States, have conducted themselves with great prudence and political moderation, insomuch that we may anticipate a

pretty general and harmonious acquiescence. We shall impatiently wait the result from New York and North Carolina. The other State, which has not yet acted, is nearly out of the question.

“I am happy to hear from General Lincoln and others that affairs are taking a good turn in Massachusetts, but the triumph of salutary and liberal measures over those of an opposite tendency seems to be as complete in Connecticut as in any other State, and affords a particular subject of congratulation. Your friend, Colonel Humphreys, informs me from the wonderful revolution of sentiment in favor of Federal measures and the marvellous change for the better in the elections of your State, that he shall begin to suspect that miracles have not ceased. Indeed, for myself, since so much liberality has been displayed in the construction and adoption of the proposed general government, I am almost disposed to be of the same opinion. Or at least we may, with a kind of pious and grateful exultation, trace the finger of Providence through those dark and mysterious events which first induced the States to appoint a general convention and then led them one after another, by such steps as were best calculated to effect the object into an adoption of the system recommended by that general convention, thereby, in all human probability, laying a lasting foundation for tranquillity and happiness, when we had but too much reason to fear that confusion and misery were coming rapidly upon us.”

North Carolina and Rhode Island did not at first accept the constitution and New York was apparently dragged into it by a repugnance to being excluded from the confederacy. At length the conventions of eleven States assented to and ratified the constitution. When officially informed of this fact, Congress passed an act appointing a



day for the people throughout the Union to choose electors of a president of the United States in compliance with the provision in the constitution and another day for the electors to meet and vote for the person of their choice. The choice of electors was to take place in February, 1789, and the electors were to meet and choose a president on the first Wednesday in March following.

A few days before the close of the convention, Washington prepared and submitted a draft of a letter to Congress, which was adopted. The constitution having been duly signed, it was transmitted to Congress, with the letter from the president of the convention.

“IN CONVENTION, *September 17, 1787.*

“SIR:— We have now the honor to submit to the consideration of the United States, in Congress assembled, that constitution which has appeared to us the most advisable.

“The friends of our country have long seen and desired, that the power of making war, peace, and treaties; that of levying money, and regulating commerce, and the correspondent executive and judicial authorities, should be fully and effectually vested in the general government of the Union: but the impropriety of delegating such extensive trust to one body of men is evident. Hence results the necessity for a different organization.

“It is obviously impracticable in the federal government of these States to secure all the rights of independent sovereignty to each, and yet provide for the interest and safety of all. Individuals entering into society, must give up a share of liberty, to preserve the rest. The magnitude of the sacrifice must depend, as well on situation and cir-

cumstance, as on the object to be obtained. It is at all times difficult to draw with precision the line between those rights which must be surrendered, and those which may be reserved; and on the present occasion, this difficulty was increased by a difference among the several States, as to their situation, extent, habits, and particular interests.

“ In all our deliberations on this subject, we kept steadily in our view that which appears to us the greatest interest of every true American, the consolidation of our Union, in which is involved our prosperity, felicity, safety, perhaps our national existence. This important consideration, seriously and deeply impressed on our minds, led each State in the Convention to be less rigid on points of inferior magnitude than might have been otherwise expected; and thus the constitution, which we now present, is the result of a spirit of amity, and of that mutual deference and concession, which the peculiarity of our political situation rendered indispensable.

“ That it will meet the full and entire approbation of every State, is not perhaps to be expected; but each State will doubtless consider, that had her interests alone been consulted, the consequences might have been particularly disagreeable or injurious to others; that it is liable to as few exceptions as could reasonably have been expected, we hope and believe; that it may promote the lasting welfare of that country so dear to us all, and secure her freedom and happiness, is our most ardent wish.

“ With great respect, we have the honor to be, sir, your Excellency’s most obedient and humble servants.

“ GEORGE WASHINGTON,

“ *President.*

“ By unanimous Order of the Convention.

“ HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.”

We give this important document in full, as contained in the Supplement to the Journal of the Federal Convention.

## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

WE, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

### ARTICLE I.

SECT. 1. All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

SECT. 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several States; and the electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislature.

No person shall be a representative who shall not have attained to the age of twenty-five years, and been seven years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons. The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress

of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct. The number of representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each State shall have, at least, one representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to choose three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the representation from any State, the executive authority thereof shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall choose their speaker and other officers; and shall have the sole power of impeachment.

SECT. 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each State, chosen by the legislature thereof, for six years; and each senator shall have one vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in consequence of the first election, they shall be divided, as equally as may be, into three classes. The seats of the senators of the first class shall be vacated at the expiration of the second year, of the second class at the expiration of the fourth year, and of the third class at the expiration of the sixth year, so that one-third may be chosen every second year; and if vacancies happen by resignation or otherwise, during the recess of the Legislature of any State, the executive thereof may make temporary appointments until the next meeting of the legislature, which shall then fill such vacancies.

No person shall be a senator who shall not have attained

to the age of thirty years, and been nine years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

The vice-president of the United States shall be president of the Senate, but shall have no vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall choose their other officers, also a president pro tempore, in the absence of the vice-president, or when he shall exercise the office of president of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or affirmation. When the president of the United States is tried, the chief-justice shall preside; and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present.

Judgment in cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust, or profit, under the United States; but the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment, and punishment, according to law.

SECT. 4. The times, places, and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time, by law, make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of choosing senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

SECT. 5. Each house shall be the judge of the elections, returns, and qualifications of its own members; and a majority of each shall constitute a quorum to do business; but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and



may be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members, in such manner, and under such penalties, as each house may provide.

Each house may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members for disorderly behavior, and, with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a member.

Each house shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may, in their judgment, require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the members of either house on any question, shall, at the request of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journal.

Neither house, during the session of Congress, shall, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other place than that in which the two houses shall be sitting.

SECT. 6. The senators and representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law, and paid out of the treasury of the United States. They shall in all cases, except treason, felony, and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the session of their respective houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any speech or debate in either house, they shall not be questioned in any other place.

No senator or representative shall, during the time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil office under the authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the emoluments whereof shall have been increased during such time; and no person holding any office under the United States shall be a member of either house during his continuance in office.

SECT. 7. All bills for raising revenue shall originate in

the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other bills.

Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a law, be presented to the president of the United States. If he approve, he shall sign it; but if not, he shall return it, with his objections, to that house in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the objections at large on their journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If, after such reconsideration, two-thirds of that house shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections, to the other house, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two-thirds of that house it shall become a law. But in all such cases, the votes of both houses shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the persons voting for and against the bill shall be entered on the journal of each house respectively. If any bill shall not be returned by the president within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law, in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress, by their adjournment, prevent its return, in which case it shall not be a law.

Every order, resolution, or vote, to which the concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of adjournment), shall be presented to the president of the United States; and before the same shall take effect, shall be approved by him, or, being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two-thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the rules and limitations prescribed in the case of a bill.

SECT. 8. The Congress shall have power —

To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises :

To pay the debts and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States; but all duties,

imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States :

To borrow money on the credit of the United States :

To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes :

To establish a uniform rule of naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States :

To coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin, and fix the standard of weights and measures :

To provide for the punishment of counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States :

To establish post-offices and post-roads :

To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times, to authors and inventors, the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries :

To constitute tribunals inferior to the supreme court :

To define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas, and offences against the law of nations :

To declare war, to grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water :

To raise and support armies ; but no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years :

To provide and maintain a navy :

To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces :

To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions :

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States — reserving to the States respectively the appointment of the officers,

and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress :

To exercise exclusive legislation, in all cases whatsoever, over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of government of the United States, and to exercise like authority over all places purchased, by the consent of the legislature of the State in which the same shall be, for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dock-yards, and other needful buildings :— and,

To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

SECT. 9. The migration or importation of such persons as any of the States, now existing, shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year 1808, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each person.

The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when, in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require it.

No bill of attainder, or ex post facto law, shall be passed.

No capitation, or other direct tax shall be laid, unless in proportion to the census or enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

No tax or duty shall be laid on articles exported from any State. No preference shall be given, by any regulation of commerce or revenue, to the ports of one State over those of another ; nor shall vessels bound to, or from one State, be obliged to enter, clear, or pay duties in another.

No money shall be drawn from the treasury, but in con-



LAFAYETTE.





sequence of appropriations made by law: and a regular statement and account of the receipts and expenditures of all public money shall be published from time to time.

No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States: and no person holding any office of profit or trust under them, shall, without the consent of the Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office, or title of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign state.

SECT. 10. No State shall enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation; grant letters of marque and reprisal; coin money; emit bills of credit; make any thing but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts; pass any bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, or grant any title of nobility.

No State shall, without the consent of the Congress, lay any imposts or duties on imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection laws; and the net produce of all duties and imposts, laid by any State on imports or exports, shall be for the use of the treasury of the United States; and all such laws shall be subject to the revision and control of the Congress. No State shall, without the consent of Congress, lay any duty of tonnage, keep troops or ships of war in time of peace, enter into any agreement or compact with another State, or with a foreign power, or engage in war, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay.

#### ARTICLE II.

SECT. 1. The executive power shall be vested in a president of the United States of America. He shall hold his office during the term of four years, and, together with the vice-president, chosen for the same term, be elected as follows:

Each State shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors equal to the whole number of senators and representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress; but no senator or representative, or person holding any office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector.

The electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by ballot for two persons, of whom one at least shall not be an inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each; which list they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the president of the Senate. The president of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be the president, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such majority, and have an equal number of votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately choose, by ballot, one of them for president; and if no person have a majority, then from the five highest on the list, the said house shall, in like manner, choose the president. But in choosing the president, the votes shall be taken by States, the representation from each State having one vote. A quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the States, and a majority of all the States shall be necessary to a choice. In every case, after the choice of the president, the person having the greatest number of votes of the electors shall be the vice-president. But if there should remain two or more

who have equal votes, the Senate shall choose from them, by ballot, the vice-president.

The Congress may determine the time of choosing the electors, and the day on which they shall give their votes; which day shall be the same throughout the United States.

No person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of the United States at the time of the adoption of this constitution, shall be eligible to the office of president; neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty-five years, and been fourteen years a resident within the United States.

In case the removal of the president from office, or of his death, resignation, or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the said office, the same shall devolve on the vice-president; and the Congress may by law provide for the case of removal, death, resignation, or inability, both of the president and vice-president, declaring what officer shall then act as president, and such officer shall act accordingly until the disability be removed, or a president shall be elected.

The president shall, at stated times, receive for his services a compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that period any other emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enters on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation:

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of president of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the constitution of the United States.”

SECT. 2. The president shall be commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia

of the several States, when called into the actual service of the United States; he may require the opinion, in writing, of the principal officer in each of the executive departments, upon any subject relating to the duties of their respective offices; and he shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States, except in cases of impeachment.

He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers, and consuls, judges of the supreme court, and all other officers of the United States, whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by law. But the Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers as they think proper in the president alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments.

The president shall have power to fill up all vacancies that may happen during the recess of the Senate, by granting commissions, which shall expire at the end of their next session.

SECT. 3. He shall, from time to time, give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary occasions, convene both houses, or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them, with respect to the time of adjournment, he may adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers; he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed; and shall commission all the officers of the United States.

SECT. 4. The president, vice-president, and all civil offi-

cers of the United States shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.

## ARTICLE III.

SECT. 1. The judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one supreme court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may, from time to time, ordain and establish. The judges, both of the supreme and inferior courts, shall hold their offices during good behavior; and shall, at stated times, receive for their services a compensation, which shall not be diminished during their continuance in office.

SECT. 2. The judicial power shall extend to all cases in law and equity, arising under this constitution, the laws of the United States, and treaties made, or which shall be made under their authority; to all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers, and consuls; to all cases of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction; to controversies to which the United States shall be a party; to controversies between two or more States, between a State and citizens of another State, between citizens of different States, between citizens of the same State, claiming lands under grants of different States, and between a State, or the citizens thereof, and foreign States, citizens, or subjects.

In all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers, and consuls, and those in which a State shall be a party, the supreme court shall have original jurisdiction. In all the other cases before mentioned, the supreme court shall have appellate jurisdiction, both as to law and fact, with such exceptions and under such regulations as the Congress shall make.

The trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury; and such trial shall be held in the State



where the said crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any State, the trial shall be at such place or places as the Congress may by law have directed.

SECT. 3. Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court.

The Congress shall have power to declare the punishment of treason; but no attainder of treason shall work corruption of blood, or forfeiture, except during the life of the person attainted.

#### ARTICLE IV.

SECT. 1. Full faith and credit shall be given in each State to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may, by general laws, prescribe the manner in which such acts, records, and proceedings shall be proved, and the effect thereof.

SECT. 2. The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States.

A person charged in any State with treason, felony, or other crime, who shall flee from justice, and be found in another State, shall, on demand of the executive authority of the State from which he fled, be delivered up, to be removed to the State having jurisdiction of the crime.

No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor; but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

SECT. 3. New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other State, nor any State be formed by the junction of two or more States, or parts of States, without the consent of the legislatures of the States concerned, as well as of the Congress.

The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

SECT. 4. The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or of the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened), against domestic violence.

#### ARTICLE V.

The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this constitution; or, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress: Provided, that no amendment which may be made prior to the year 1808, shall in any manner affect the first and fourth clauses in the ninth section of the first article; and that no State, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate.

## ARTICLE VI.

All debts contracted and engagements entered into, before the adoption of this constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this constitution as under the confederation.

This constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any thing in the constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.

The senators and representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several State legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

## ARTICLE VII.

The ratification of the conventions of nine States shall be sufficient for the establishment of this constitution between the States so ratifying the same.

Done in convention, by the unanimous consent of the States present, the 17th day of September, in the year of our Lord 1787, and of the independence of the United States of America, the twelfth. In witness whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names.

GEORGE WASHINGTON,  
*President, and Deputy from Virginia.*  
*New Hampshire.*

JOHN LANGDON,  
NICHOLAS GILMAN.

*Massachusetts.*

NATHANIEL GORHAM,  
RUFUS KING.

*Connecticut.*

WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON,  
ROGER SHERMAN.

*New York.*

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

*New Jersey.*

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON,  
DAVID BREARLY,  
WILLIAM PATTERSON,  
JONATHAN DAYTON.

*Pennsylvania.*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,  
THOMAS MIFFLIN,  
ROBERT MORRIS,  
GEORGE CLYMER,  
THOMAS FITZSIMONS,  
JARED INGERSOLL,  
JAMES WILSON,  
GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

*Delaware.*

GEORGE READ,  
GUNNING BEDFORD, JR.,  
JOHN DICKINSON,  
RICHARD BASSETT,  
JACOB BROOM.

*Maryland.*

JAMES M'HENRY,  
DANIEL OF ST. THOMAS JENIFER,  
DANIEL CARROLL.

## WASHINGTON.

*Virginia.*

JOHN BLAIR,  
JAMES MADISON, JR.

*North Carolina.*

WILLIAM BLOUNT,  
RICHARD DOBBS SPAIGHT,  
HUGH WILLIAMSON.

*South Carolina.*

JOHN RUTLEDGE,  
CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY,  
CHARLES PINCKNEY,  
PIERCE BUTLER.

*Georgia.*

WILLIAM FEW,  
ABRAHAM BALDWIN.

Attest: WILLIAM JACKSON, *Secretary.*

## PART VI.

### WASHINGTON AS PRESIDENT AND IN RETIREMENT.

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#### CHAPTER I.

#### THE ELECTION.

1789.

AS soon as it was ascertained that the new form of government had received the sanction of the people and would go into immediate operation, all eyes were at once turned to Washington as the first President of the United States. During the war he had, in fact, directed the course of public affairs. His suggestions had been almost invariably followed by Congress. His recommendations had influenced the action of the different States. His practical administrative abilities were known to all. He alone possessed the confidence of the people to that degree which was necessary to carry the constitution into vigorous effect at the outset and to defend it against its secret as well as its open enemies. But it was by no means certain that he would accept the office. By all who knew him, fears were entertained that his preference for private life would prevail over the wishes of the public, and soon after the adoption of the constitution was ascertained, his correspondents began to press him on a point which was believed essential to the completion of the great work on which the grandeur and happiness of

(1579)



America was supposed to depend. "We cannot," said Mr. Johnson, a man of great political eminence in Maryland, "do without you; and I, and thousands more, can explain to anybody but yourself why we cannot do without you." "I have ever thought," said Gouverneur Morris, "and have ever said, that you must be President; no other man can fill that office. No other man can draw forth the abilities of our country into the various departments of civil life. You alone can awe the insolence of opposing factions and the greater insolence of assuming adherents. I say nothing of foreign powers nor of their ministers. With these last you will have some plague. As to your feelings on this occasion they are, I know, both deep and affecting: you embark property most precious on a most tempestuous ocean; for, as you possess the highest reputation, so you expose it to the perilous chance of popular opinion. On the other hand, you will, I firmly expect, enjoy the inexpressible felicity of contributing to the happiness of all your countrymen. You will become the father of more than three millions of children; and while your bosom glows with parental tenderness, in theirs or at least in a majority of them, you will excite the duteous sentiments of filial affection. This, I repeat it, is what I firmly expect; and my views are not directed by that enthusiasm which your public character has impressed on the public mind. Enthusiasm is generally short-sighted and too often blind. I form my conclusions from those talents and virtues which the world believes and which your friends know you possess."

In a letter detailing the arrangements which were making for the introduction of the new government, Col. Henry Lee proceeded thus to speak of the presidency of the United States. "The solemnity of the moment and its application to yourself have fixed my mind in contempla-

tions of a public and a personal nature, and I feel an involuntary impulse which I cannot resist, to communicate without reserve to you some of the reflections which the hour has produced. Solicitous for our common happiness as a people, and convicted as I continue to be that our peace and prosperity depend on the proper improvement of the present period, my anxiety is extreme that the new government may have an auspicious beginning. To effect this and to perpetuate a nation formed under your auspices it is certain that again you will be called forth.

“The same principles of devotion to the good of mankind which have invariably governed your conduct will no doubt continue to rule your mind, however opposite their consequences may be to your repose and happiness. It may be wrong, but I cannot suppress, in my wishes for national felicity, a due regard for your personal fame and content.

“If the same success should attend your efforts on this important occasion which has distinguished you hitherto, then, to be sure, you will have spent a life which Providence rarely if ever before gave to the lot of one man. It is my anxious hope, it is my belief, that this will be the case; but all things are uncertain, and perhaps nothing more so than political events.” He then proceeded to state his apprehensions that the government might sink under the activity hostility of its foes, and in particular the fears which he entertained from the circular letter of New York, around which the minorities in the several States might be expected to rally. Before concluding his letter, Colonel Lee said, “Without you the government can have but little chance of success; and the people of that happiness which its prosperity must yield.”

In reply to this letter Washington said: “Your observations on the solemnity of the crisis and its application to

myself bring before me subjects of the most momentous and interesting nature. In our endeavors to establish a new general government the contest, nationally considered, seems not to have been so much for glory as existence. It was for a long time doubtful whether we were to survive as an independent Republic or decline from our federal dignity into insignificant and wretched fragments of empire. The adoption of the constitution so extensively and with so liberal an acquiescence on the part of the minorities in general, promised the former; but lately the circular letter of New York has manifested, in my apprehension, an unfavorable if not an insidious tendency to a contrary policy. I still hope for the best, but before you mentioned it I could not help fearing it would serve as a standard to which the disaffected might resort. It is now evidently the part of all honest men who are friends to the new constitution, to endeavor to give it a chance to disclose its merits and defects, by carrying it fairly into effect in the first instance.

“The principal topic of your letter is to me a point of great delicacy indeed — insomuch that I can scarcely without some impropriety touch upon it. In the first place, the event to which you allude may never happen; among other reasons, because, if the partiality of my fellow-citizens conceive it to be a means by which the sinews of the new government would be strengthened, it will of consequence be obnoxious to those who are in opposition to it, many of whom unquestionably will be placed among the electors,

“This consideration alone would supersede the expediency of announcing any definite and irrevocable resolution. You are among the small number of those who know my invincible attachment to domestic life, and that my sincerest wish is to continue in the enjoyment of it

solely, until my final hour. But the world would be neither so well instructed, nor so candidly disposed, as to believe me to be uninfluenced by sinister motives, in case any circumstance should render a deviation from the line of conduct I had prescribed for myself indispensable. Should the contingency you suggest take place, and (for argument sake alone, let me say) should my unfeigned reluctance to accept the office be overcome by a deference for the reasons and opinions of my friends, might I not, after the declarations I have made (and heaven knows they were made in the sincerity of my heart), in the judgment of the impartial world, and of posterity, be chargeable with levity and inconsistency, if not with rashness and ambition? Nay, further, would there not even be some apparent foundation for the two former charges? Now, justice to myself, and tranquillity of conscience, require that I should act a part, if not above imputation, at least capable of vindication. Nor will you conceive me to be too solicitous for reputation. Though I prize as I ought the good opinion of my fellow-citizens, yet, if I know myself, I would not seek or retain popularity at the expense of one social duty or moral virtue. While doing what my conscience informed me was right, as it respected *my God*, my country, and myself, I could despise all the party clamor and unjust censure which must be expected from some, whose personal enmity might be occasioned by their hostility to the government. I am conscious that I fear alone to give any real occasion for obloquy, and that I do not dread to meet with unmerited reproach. And certain I am, whenever I shall be convinced the good of my country requires my reputation to be put in risk, regard for my own fame will not come in competition with an object of so much magnitude.

“ If I declined the task it would be upon quite another

principle. Notwithstanding my advanced season of life, my increasing fondness for agricultural amusements, and my growing love of retirement, augment and confirm my decided predilection for the character of a private citizen, yet it will be no one of these motives, nor the hazard to which my former reputation might be exposed, or the terror of encountering new fatigues and troubles, that would deter me from an acceptance, but a belief that some other person, who had less pretense and less inclination to be excused, could execute all the duties full as satisfactorily as myself. To say more would be indiscreet, as a disclosure of a refusal beforehand might incur the application of the fable in which the fox is represented as undervaluing the grapes he could not reach. You will perceive, my dear sir, by what is here observed (and which you will be pleased to consider in the light of a confidential communication), that my inclinations will dispose and decide me to remain as I am, unless a clear and insurmountable conviction should be impressed on my mind, that some very disagreeable consequences must in all human probability result from the indulgence of my wishes."

About the same time Colonel Hamilton concluded a letter on miscellaneous subjects with the following observations. "I take it for granted, sir, you have concluded to comply with what will, no doubt, be the general call of your country in relation to the new government. You will permit me to say that it is indispensable you should lend yourself to its first operations. It is to little purpose to have introduced a system, if the weightiest influence is not given to its firm establishment in the outset."

"On the delicate subject," said Washington in reply, "with which you conclude your letter, I can say nothing; because the event alluded to may never happen; and because, in case it should occur, it would be a point of pru-

dence to defer forming one's ultimate and irrevocable decision so long as new data might be afforded for one to act with the greater wisdom and propriety. I would not wish to conceal my prevailing sentiment from you. For you know me well enough, my good sir, to be persuaded that I am not guilty of affectation, when I tell you it is my great and sole desire to live and die in peace and retirement on my own farm. Were it even indispensable a different line of conduct should be adopted, while you and some others who are acquainted with my heart would acquit, the world and posterity might probably accuse me of inconsistency and ambition. Still, I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable of all titles) the character of an honest man."

This answer drew from Hamilton the following reply: "I should be deeply pained, my dear sir, if your scruples in regard to a certain station should be matured into a resolution to decline it; though I am neither surprised at their existence, nor can I but agree in opinion that the caution you observe in deferring the ultimate determination is prudent. I have, however, reflected maturely on the subject, and have come to the conclusion (in which I feel no hesitation) that every public and personal consideration will demand from you an acquiescence in what will certainly be the unanimous wish of your country.

"The absolute retreat which you meditated at the close of the late war was natural and proper. Had the government produced by the Revolution gone on in a tolerable train, it would have been most advisable to have persisted in that retreat. But I am clearly of opinion that the crisis which brought you again into public view left you no alternative but to comply; and I am equally clear in the opinion that you are by that act pledged to take a part in the



execution of the government. I am not less convinced that the impression of the necessity of your filling the station in question is so universal that you run no risk of any uncandid imputation by submitting to it. But even if this were not the case, a regard to your own reputation, as well as to the public good, calls upon you in the strongest manner to run that risk.

“It cannot be considered as a compliment to say that, on your acceptance of the office of President, the success of the new government in its commencement may materially depend. Your agency and influence will be not less important in preserving it from the future attacks of its enemies than they have been in recommending it in the first instance to the adoption of the people. Independent of all considerations drawn from this source, the point of light in which you stand at home and abroad will make an infinite difference in the respectability with which the government will begin its operations, in the alternative of your being or not being at the head of it. I forbear to mention considerations which might have a more personal application. What I have said will suffice for the inferences I mean to draw.

“First. In a matter so essential to the well-being of society as the prosperity of a newly-instituted government. a citizen of so much consequence as yourself to its success has no option but to lend his services if called for. Permit me to say it would be inglorious, in such a situation, not to hazard the glory, however great, which he might have previously acquired.

“Secondly. Your signature to the proposed system pledges your judgment for its being such a one as, upon the whole, was worthy of the public approbation. If it should miscarry (as men commonly decide from success or the want of it), the blame will, in all probability, be

laid on the system itself. And the framers of it will have to encounter the disrepute of having brought about a revolution in government without substituting anything that was worthy of the effort; they pulled down one utopia, it will be said, to build up another. This view of the subject, if I mistake not, my dear sir, will suggest to your mind greater hazard to that fame which must be, and ought to be, dear to you, in refusing your future aid to the system than in affording it. I will only add that in my estimate of the matter that aid is indispensable.

“I have taken the liberty to express these sentiments and to lay before you my view of the subject. I doubt not the considerations mentioned have fully occurred to you, and I trust they will finally produce in your mind the same result which exists in mine. I flatter myself the frankness with which I have delivered myself will not be displeasing to you. It has been prompted by motives which you would not disapprove.”

In answer to this letter, Washington expressed himself without reserve. “In acknowledging,” said he, “the receipt of your candid and kind letter by the last post, little more is incumbent on me than to thank you sincerely for the frankness with which you communicated your sentiments, and to assure you that the same manly tone of intercourse will always be more than barely welcome—indeed, it will be highly acceptable to me.

“I am particularly glad, in the present instance, that you have dealt thus freely and like a friend. Although I could not help observing, from several publications and letters, that my name had been sometimes spoken of, and that it was possible the contingency which is the subject of your letter might happen, yet I thought it best to maintain a guarded silence, and to lack the counsel of my best friends (which I certainly hold in the highest estimation),

rather than to hazard an imputation unfriendly to the delicacy of my feelings. For, situated as I am, I could hardly bring the question into the slightest discussion, or ask an opinion even in the most confidential manner, without betraying, in my judgment, some impropriety of conduct, or without feeling an apprehension that a premature display of anxiety might be construed into a vainglorious desire of pushing myself into notice as a candidate. Now, if I am not grossly deceived in myself, I should unfeignedly rejoice, in case the electors, by giving their votes in favor of some other person, would save me from the dreadful dilemma of being forced to accept or refuse. If that may not be, I am, in the next place, earnestly desirous of searching out the truth, and of knowing whether there does not exist a probability that the government would be just as happily and effectually carried into execution without my aid as with it. I am truly solicitous to obtain all the previous information which the circumstances will afford, and to determine (when the determination can with propriety be no longer postponed), according to the principles of right reason and the dictates of a clear conscience, without too great a reference to the unforeseen consequences which may affect my person or reputation. Until that period, I may fairly hold myself open to conviction, though I allow your sentiments to have weight in them, and I shall not pass by your arguments without giving them as dispassionate a consideration as I can possibly bestow upon them.

“In taking a survey of the subject, in whatever point of light I have been able to place it, I will not suppress the acknowledgment, my dear sir, that I have always felt a kind of gloom upon my mind, as often as I have been taught to expect I might, and perhaps must ere long, be called to make a decision. You will, I am well assured, believe

the assertion (though I have little expectation it would gain credit from those who are less acquainted with me), that if I should receive the appointment, and should be prevailed upon to accept it, the acceptance would be attended with more diffidence and reluctance than ever I experienced before in my life. It would be, however, with a fixed and sole determination of lending whatever assistance might be in my power to promote the public weal, in hopes that at a convenient and an early period, my services might be dispensed with, and that I might be permitted once more to retire — to pass an unclouded evening, after the stormy day of life, in the bosom of domestic tranquillity.”

This correspondence was thus closed by Hamilton: “I feel a conviction that you will finally see your acceptance to be indispensable. It is no compliment to say that no other man can sufficiently unite the public opinion, or can give the requisite weight to the office, in the commencement of the government. These considerations appear to me of themselves decisive. I am not sure that your refusal would not throw everything into confusion. I am sure that it would have the worst effect imaginable.

“Indeed, as I hinted in a former letter, I think circumstances leave no option.”

Although this correspondence does not appear to have absolutely decided Washington on the part he should embrace, it could not have been without its influence on his judgment, nor have failed to dispose him to yield to the wish of his country. “I would willingly,” said he, to his estimable friend, General Lincoln, who had also pressed the subject on him, “pass over in silence that part of your letter in which you mention the persons who are candidates for the two first offices in the executive, if I did not fear the omission might seem to betray a want of confi-

dence. Motives of delicacy have prevented me hitherto from conversing or writing on this subject, whenever I could avoid it with decency. I may, however, with great sincerity, and I believe without offending against modesty or propriety, say to you that I most heartily wish the choice to which you allude might not fall upon me; and that if it should, I must reserve to myself the right of making up my final decision at the last moment, when it can be brought into one view and when the expediency or inexpediency of a refusal can be more judiciously determined than at present. But be assured, my dear sir, if from any inducement I shall be persuaded ultimately to accept, it will not be (so far as I know my own heart) from any of a private or personal nature. Every personal consideration conspires to rivet me (if I may use the expression) to retirement. At my time of life, and under my circumstances, nothing in this world can ever draw me from it, unless it be a conviction that the partiality of my countrymen had made my services absolutely necessary, joined to a fear that my refusal might induce a belief that I preferred the conservation of my own reputation and private ease to the good of my country. After all, if I should conceive myself in a manner constrained to accept, I call Heaven to witness that this very act would be the greatest sacrifice of my personal feelings and wishes that ever I have been called upon to make. It would be to forego repose and domestic enjoyment for trouble—perhaps for public obloquy; for I should consider myself as entering upon an unexplored field, enveloped on every side with clouds and darkness.

“From this embarrassing situation I had naturally supposed that my declarations at the close of the war would have saved me, and that my sincere intentions, then publicly made known, would have effectually precluded me

forever afterward from being looked upon as a candidate for any office. This hope, as a last anchor of worldly happiness in old age, I had still carefully preserved, until the public papers and private letters from my correspondents in almost every quarter taught me to apprehend that I might soon be obliged to answer the question whether I would go again into public life or not."

"I can say little or nothing new," said he in a letter to Lafayette, "in consequence of the repetition of your opinion on the expediency there will be for my accepting the office to which you refer. Your sentiments, indeed, coincide much more nearly with those of my other friends than with my own feelings. In truth, my difficulties increase and magnify as I draw toward the period when, according to the common belief, it will be necessary for me to give a definitive answer in one way or other. Should circumstances render it, in a manner, inevitably necessary to be in the affirmative, be assured, my dear sir, I shall assume the task with the most unfeigned reluctance and with a real diffidence, for which I shall probably receive no credit from the world. If I know my own heart, nothing short of a conviction of duty will induce me again to take an active part in public affairs. And in that case, if I can form a plan for my own conduct, my endeavors shall be unremittingly exerted (even at the hazard of former fame or present popularity) to extricate my country from the embarrassments in which it is entangled through want of credit, and to establish a general system of policy which, if pursued, will insure permanent felicity to the commonwealth. I think I see a path, as clear and as direct as a ray of light, which leads to the attainment of that object. Nothing but harmony, honesty, industry, and frugality are necessary to make us a great and happy people. Happily, the present posture of affairs, and the prevailing dis-



position of my countrymen, promise to co-operate in establishing those four great and essential pillars of public felicity."

After the electors had been chosen, and before the electoral colleges met, Washington was assailed with the usual importunities of office-seekers.

As marking the frame of mind with which he came into the government, the following extract is given from one of the many letters written to persons whose pretensions he was disposed to favor. "Should it become absolutely necessary for me to occupy the station in which your letter presupposes me, I have determined to go into it perfectly free from all engagements of every nature whatsoever. A conduct in conformity to this resolution would enable me, in balancing the various pretensions of different candidates for appointments, to act with a sole reference to justice and the public good. This is, in substance, the answer that I have given to all applications (and they are not few) which have already been made. Among the places sought after in these applications, I must not conceal that the office to which you particularly allude is comprehended. This fact I tell you merely as matter of information. My general manner of thinking, as to the propriety of holding myself totally disengaged, will apologize for my not enlarging further on the subject.

"Though I am sensible that the public suffrage which places a man in office should prevent him from being swayed, in the execution of it, by his private inclinations, yet he may assuredly, without violating his duty, be indulged in the continuance of his former attachments."

Although the time appointed for the new government to commence its operations was the 4th of March, 1789, the members of Congress were so dilatory in their attend-

ance that a House of Representatives was not formed till the 1st nor a Senate till the 6th of April.

When at length the votes for President and Vice-President were opened and counted in the Senate, it was found that Washington was unanimously elected President, and that the second number of votes was given to John Adams. George Washington and John Adams were therefore declared to be duly elected President and Vice-President of the United States, to serve for four years from the 4th of March, 1789.

In a letter to General Knox, just before this announcement, Washington thus adverts to the delay in forming a quorum of Congress: "I feel for those members of the new Congress, who, hitherto, have given an unavailing attendance at the theater of action. For myself, the delay may be compared to a reprieve; for, in confidence, I tell you (with the world it would obtain little credit) that my movements to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution; so unwilling am I, in the evening of life, nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination which are necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible that I am embarking the voice of the people, and a good name of my own, on this voyage; but what returns will be made for them heaven alone can foretell. Integrity and firmness are all I can promise; these, be the voyage long or short, shall never forsake me, although I may be deserted by all men; for of the consolations which are to be derived from these, under any circumstances, the world cannot deprive me." There is every reason to believe that the diffidence expressed in the above was sincere. It is perfectly consistent with the unaffected modesty of Washington's character.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ADMINISTRATION FORMED.

1789.

WASHINGTON'S election was announced to him by a special messenger from Congress, on the 14th of April, 1789. His acceptance of it, and his expressions of gratitude for this fresh proof of the esteem and confidence of his country, were connected with declarations of diffidence in himself. "I wish," he said, "that there may not be reason for regretting the choice — for, indeed, all I can promise is to accomplish that which can be done by an honest zeal."

As the public business required the immediate attendance of the President at the seat of government, he hastened his departure, and, on the second day after receiving notice of his appointment, took leave of Mount Vernon.

In an entry made by himself in his diary, the feelings inspired by an occasion so affecting to his mind are thus described: "About 10 o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity, and, with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York in company with Mr. Thomson and Colonel Humphreys, with the best dispositions to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations."

"The President and his lady," says Mr. Custis, "bid adieu with extreme regret to the tranquil and happy shades

where a few years of repose had, in a great measure, effaced the effects of the toils and anxieties of war; where little Eden had bloomed and flourished under their fostering hands and where a numerous circle of friends and relatives would sensibly feel the privation of their departure. They departed and hastened to where duty called the man of his country."

Soon after leaving Mount Vernon he was met by a cavalcade of gentlemen, who escorted him to Alexandria, where a public dinner had been prepared to which he was invited. Arrived at that place, he was greeted by a public address, to which he made an appropriate reply. The address differs from others, inasmuch as it came from his personal friends and neighbors, and gives some interesting personal details. The tenor of the following passage must have sensibly touched the feelings of Washington:

"Not to extol your glory as a soldier; not to pour forth our gratitude for past services; not to acknowledge the justice of the unexampled honor which has been conferred upon you by the spontaneous and unanimous suffrages of 3,000,000 of freemen, in your election to the supreme magistracy; nor to admire the patriotism which directs your conduct, do your neighbors and friends now address you. Themes less splendid, but more endearing, impress our minds. The first and best of citizens must leave us; our aged must lose their ornament; our youth their model; our agriculture its improver; our commerce its friend; our infant academy its protector; our poor their benefactor; and the interior navigation of the Potomac (an event replete with the most extensive utility, already, by your unremitted exertions, brought into partial use) its institutor and promoter."

Washington left Alexandria on the afternoon of the same day and attended by his neighbors proceeded to

Georgetown, where he was received by a number of citizens of Maryland. His journey thenceforth to the seat of government was a continual triumph. Military escorts, cavalcades of citizens, and crowds of people of all ages and both sexes awaited his arrival at each town. We may imagine the enthusiastic shouts and welcomes with which he was received by the people.

On his approach to Philadelphia he was met by Governor Mifflin, Judge Peters, and a military escort, headed by General St. Clair, and followed by the usual cavalcade of gentlemen. Washington was mounted on a splendid white horse. The procession passed into the city through triumphal arches adorned with wreaths of flowers and laurel, attended by an immense crowd of people. The day was a public festival, and in the evening an illumination and a display of fireworks testified the enthusiasm of the occasion. The next day, at Trenton, he was welcomed in a manner as new as it was pleasing. In addition to the usual demonstrations of respect and attachment which were given by the discharge of cannon, by military corps, and by private persons of distinction, the gentler sex prepared in their own taste a tribute of applause indicative of the grateful recollection in which they held their deliverance twelve years before from a formidable enemy. On the bridge over the creek which passes through the town was erected a triumphal arch highly ornamented with laurels and flowers and supported by thirteen pillars, each entwined with wreaths of evergreen. On the front arch was inscribed in large gilt letters, "The defender of the mothers will be the protector of the daughters."

On the center of the arch, above the inscription, was a dome or cupola of flowers and evergreens, encircling the dates of two memorable events which were peculiarly interesting to New Jersey. The first was the battle of

Trenton, and the second the bold and judicious stand made by the American troops at the same creek, by which the progress of the British army was arrested on the evening preceding the battle of Princeton.

At this place he was met by a party of matrons leading their daughters, dressed in white, who carried baskets of flowers in their hands and sang, with exquisite sweetness, an ode of two stanzas, composed for the occasion.

At New Brunswick he was joined by the Governor of New Jersey, who accompanied him to Elizabethtown Point. A committee of Congress received him on the road and conducted him with military parade to the Point, where he took leave of the Governor and other gentlemen of New Jersey and embarked for New York in an elegant barge of thirteen oars, manned by thirteen branch pilots, prepared for the purpose by the citizens of New York.

"The display of boats," says Washington, in his private journal, "which attended and joined on this occasion, some with vocal and others with instrumental music, on board, the decorations of the ships, the roar of cannon, and the loud acclamations of the people, which rent the sky as I passed along the wharves, filled my mind with sensations as painful (contemplating the reverse of this scene, which may be the case after all my labors to do good) as they were pleasing."

At the stairs on Murray's wharf, which had been prepared and ornamented for the purpose, he was received by Governor Clinton, of New York, and conducted with military honors, through an immense concourse of people, to the apartments provided for him. These were attended by all who were in office and by many private citizens of distinction, who pressed around him to offer their congratulations and to express the joy which glowed in their bosoms at seeing the man in whom all confided at the



head of the American empire. This day of extravagant joy was succeeded by a splendid illumination.

Mr. Custis, writing of the journey from Mount Vernon to New York, and of Washington's mode of living at the seat of government, says:

"The august spectacle at the bridge of Trenton brought tears to the eyes of the chief, and forms one of the most brilliant recollections of the age of Washington.

"Arrived at the seat of the Federal government, the President and Mrs. Washington formed their establishment upon a scale that, while it partook of all the attributes of our republican institutions, possessed at the same time that degree of dignity and regard for appearances so necessary to give our infant Republic respect in the eyes of the world. The house was handsomely furnished; the equipages neat, with horses of the first order; the servants wore the family liveries, and, with the exception of a steward and housekeeper, the whole establishment differed but little from that of a private gentleman. On Tuesdays, from 3 to 4 o'clock, the President received the foreign ambassadors and strangers who wished to be introduced to him. On these occasions, and when opening the sessions of Congress, the President wore a dress sword. His personal apparel was always remarkable for its being old-fashioned and exceedingly plain and neat. On Thursdays were the congressional dinners and on Friday nights Mrs. Washington's drawing-room. The company usually assembled about 7 and rarely stayed exceeding 10 o'clock. The ladies were seated, and the President passed around the circle, paying his compliments to each. At the drawing-rooms Mrs. Morris always sat at the right of the lady president, and at all the dinners, public or private, at which Robert Morris was a guest, that venerable man was placed at the right of Mrs. Washington.

“On the great national festivals of the 4th of July and 22d of February, the sages of the Revolutionary Congress and the officers of the Revolutionary army renewed their acquaintance with Mrs. Washington; many and kindly greetings took place with many a recollection of the days of trial. The Cincinnati, after paying their respects to their chief, were seen to file off toward the parlor, where Lady Washington was in waiting to receive them, and where Wayne, and Mifflin, and Dickinson, and Stewart, and Moylan, and Hartley, and a host of veterans were cordially welcomed as old friends, and where many an interesting reminiscence was called up, of the headquarters and the ‘times of the Revolution.’

“On Sundays, unless the weather was uncommonly severe, the President and Mrs. Washington attended divine service at Christ Church, and in the evening the President read to Mrs. Washington, in her chamber, a sermon or some portion from the sacred writings. No visitors, with the exception of Mr. Speaker Trumbull, were admitted to the presidoliad on Sundays.

“There was one description of visitors, however, to be found about the first President’s mansion on all days. The old soldiers repaired, as they said, to headquarters just to inquire after the health of his Excellency and Lady Washington. They knew his Excellency was, of course, much engaged, but they would like to see the good lady. One had been a soldier of the life guard, another had been on duty when the British threatened to surprise the headquarters, a third had witnessed that terrible fellow, Cornwallis, surrender his sword; each one had some touching appeal with which to introduce himself to the peaceful headquarters of the presidoliad. All were ‘kindly bid to stay,’ were conducted to the steward’s apartments, and refreshments set before them, and, after receiving some

little token from the lady, with her best wishes for the health and happiness of an old soldier, they went their ways, while blessings upon their revered commander and the good Lady Washington were uttered by many a war-worn veteran of the Revolution.”\*

The simple mode of life above described did not save Washington from public censure by those who are always ready to carp at the doings of distinguished men, however unexceptionable their conduct may be. Free levees were said to savor of an affectation of royal state. In a letter to his friend, Dr. Stewart, Washington thus puts to silence this calumny, with his usual good sense and unanswerable argument :

“Before the custom was established which now accommodates foreign characters, strangers, and others, who, from motives of curiosity, respect to the chief magistrate, or any other cause, are induced to call upon me, I was unable to attend to any business whatsoever. For gentlemen, consulting their own convenience rather than mine, were calling from the time I rose from breakfast — often before — until I sat down to dinner. This, as I resolved not to neglect my public duties, reduced me to the choice of one of these alternatives — either to refuse them altogether or to appropriate a time for the reception of them. The first would, I well knew, be disgusting to many; the latter I expected would undergo animadversion from those who would find fault with or without cause. To please everybody was impossible. I therefore adopted that line of conduct which combined public advantage with private convenience, and which, in my judgment, was unexceptionable in itself.

“These visits are optional. They are made without in-

\* Memoir of Martha Washington in Longacre’s Gallery.



JOHN JAY.

*First Chief Justice of the United States.*



visitation. Between the hours of 3 and 4 every Tuesday I am prepared to receive them. Gentlemen, often in great numbers, come and go, chat with each other, and act as they please. A porter shows them into the room, and they retire from it when they choose, and without ceremony. At their first entrance they salute me and I them, and as many as I can talk to I do. What pomp there is in all this I am unable to discover. Perhaps it consists in not sitting. To this two reasons are opposed: first, it is unusual; secondly (which is a more substantial one), because I have no room large enough to contain a third of the chairs which would be sufficient to admit it. If it is supposed that ostentation or the fashions of courts (which, by the by, I believe originate oftener in convenience, not to say necessity, than is generally imagined) gave rise to this custom, I will boldly affirm that no supposition was ever more erroneous, for were I to indulge my inclinations every moment that I could withdraw from the fatigues of my station should be spent in retirement. That they are not proceeds from the sense I entertain of the propriety of giving to everyone as free access as consists with that respect which is due to the chair of government; and that respect, I conceive, is neither to be acquired or preserved but by maintaining a just medium between too much state and too great familiarity.

“Similar to the above, but of a more familiar and sociable kind, are the visits every Friday afternoon to Mrs. Washington, where I always am. These public meetings, and a dinner once a week to as many as my table will hold, with the references to and from the different departments of state and other communications with all parts of the Union, is as much if not more than I am able to undergo; for I have already had within less than a year two severe attacks — the last worse than the first; a third, it is more



than probable, will put me to sleep with my fathers — at what distance this may be I know not.”

The inauguration of Washington deserves particular notice, inasmuch as in its chief outlines it has served for the precedent to all succeeding inaugurations. Congress had determined that the ceremony of taking the oath of office should be performed in public and in the open air. It took place on the 30th of April, 1789. In the morning religious services were performed in all the churches of the city. At 12 o'clock a procession was formed at the residence of the President, consisting of a military escort and the committees of Congress and heads of departments in carriages, followed by Washington alone in a carriage, and his aid-de-camp, Colonel Humphreys, and secretary, Mr. Lear, in another carriage, with the foreign ministers and citizens bringing up the rear. The procession moved to the hall of Congress, where Washington alighted with his attendants and entered the senate chamber. Here he was received by the Senate and House of Representatives. The Vice-President, John Adams, conducted Washington to his appointed seat, and shortly after announced to him that all was prepared for his taking the oath of office. Washington then proceeded to an open balcony in front of the house, where was a table with an open Bible lying upon it. On his appearance in the balcony, he was received with a most enthusiastic burst of popular applause, which he acknowledged by bowing to the people. Chancellor Livingston administered the oath, while Adams, Hamilton, Knox, Steuben, and others stood near the President. While the oath was being administered Washington laid his hand on the Bible. At its conclusion he said, “I swear, so help me God.” His administration proves that the oath was sincere. He then stooped down and kissed the Bible. When the ceremony was con-

cluded, he returned to the senate chamber and delivered his inaugural address to the two branches of Congress. He then proceeded on foot, with the whole assemblage, to St. Paul's Church, where prayers were read by the bishop, and the public ceremonial of the day was completed.

The occasion was celebrated by the people as a grand festival, and in the evening there was a display of fireworks as well as a general illumination of the city.

This display of enthusiasm on the part of the people was far from rendering Washington over-confident of success in his new position. He was thoroughly aware of the difficulties which would have to be encountered in putting the new government into action, so as to insure its stability and success. The opening of his inaugural address to both branches of Congress gives a clear indication of his views and feelings on taking office. It is as follows:

"Among the vicissitudes incident to life, no event could have filled me with greater anxieties than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order and received on the 14th day of the present month. On the one hand I was summoned by my country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection, and, in my flattering hopes, with an immutable decision, as the asylum of my declining years; a retreat which was rendered every day more necessary as well as more dear to me by the addition of habit to inclination, and of frequent interruptions in my health to the gradual waste committed on it by time. On the other hand, the magnitude and difficulty of the trust to which the voice of my country called me, being sufficient to awaken in the wisest and most experienced of her citizens a distrustful scrutiny into his qualifications, could not but overwhelm with despondence one, who, inheriting inferior endowments from nature,

and unpractised in the duties of civil administration, ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies. In this conflict of emotions, all I dare aver is, that it has been my faithful study to collect my duty from a just appreciation of every circumstance by which it might be effected. All I dare hope is, that if, in accepting this task, I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances or by an affectionate sensibility to this transcendent proof of the confidence of my fellow-citizens, and have thence too little consulted my incapacity, as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me, my error will be palliated by the motives which misled me, and its consequences be judged by my country with some share of the partiality in which they originated.

“Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it will be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe—who presides in the councils of nations, and whose Providential aids can supply every human defect—that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States, a government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own, nor those of my fellow-citizens at large less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been

distinguished by some token of Providential agency, and in the important Revolution just accomplished in the system of their united government, the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities, from which the event has resulted, cannot be compared with the means by which most governments have been established, without some return of pious gratitude, along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seem to presage. These reflections, arising out of the present crisis, have forced themselves too strongly on my mind to be suppressed. You will join with me, I trust, in thinking that there are none under the influence of which the proceedings of a new and free government can more auspiciously commence."

It will be seen by these expressions that the same sense of solemn responsibility and the same undoubting trust in Providence, so often evinced by Washington during the conflicts and perils of the war, marked his entrance upon the arduous duties of chief magistrate of the nation. As in the previous instance of accepting office, he now signified to Congress that he would receive no compensation for his services, except such as should be necessary to defray the expenses incident to the position in which he was placed.

This determination was announced in the concluding portion of the inaugural address, which was as follows:

"By the article establishing the executive department, it is made the duty of the President 'to recommend to your consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.' The circumstances under which I now meet you will acquit me from entering into that subject, further than to refer to the great constitutional charter under which you are assembled, and which, in defining your powers, designates the objects to which your

attention is to be given. It will be more consistent with those circumstances and far more congenial with the feelings which actuate me to substitute in place of a recommendation of particular measures the tribute that is due to the talents, the rectitude, and the patriotism which adorn the characters selected to devise and adopt them. In these honorable qualifications I behold the surest pledges that, as on one side no local prejudices or attachments, no separate views nor party animosities will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye which ought to watch over this great assemblage of communities and interests; so, on another, that the foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality, and the pre-eminence of free government be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the affections of its citizens and command the respect of the world. I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction which an ardent love for my country can inspire, since there is no truth more thoroughly established than that there exists in the economy and course of nature, an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness—between duty and advantage—between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity, since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained, and since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally, staked on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people.

“Besides the ordinary objects submitted to your care it will remain with your judgment to decide how far an exercise of the occasional power delegated by the fifth



article of the constitution is rendered expedient, at the present juncture, by the nature of objections which have been urged against the system or by the degree of inquietude which has given birth to them. Instead of undertaking particular recommendations on this subject, in which I could be guided by no lights derived from official opportunities, I shall again give way to my entire confidence in your discernment and pursuit of the public good, for I assure myself that, whilst you carefully avoid every alteration which might endanger the benefits of a united and effective government, or which ought to await the future lessons of experience, a reverence for the characteristic rights of freemen and a regard for the public harmony will sufficiently influence your deliberations on the question how far the former can be more impreguably fortified or the latter be safely and advantageously promoted.

“To the preceding observations I have one to add, which will be most properly addressed to the House of Representatives. It concerns myself, and will, therefore, be as brief as possible. When I was first honored with a call into the service of my country, then on the eve of an arduous struggle for its liberties, the light in which I contemplated my duty required that I should renounce every pecuniary compensation. From this resolution I have in no instance departed. And being still under the impressions which produced it, I must decline, as inapplicable to myself, any share in the personal emoluments which may be indispensably included in a permanent provision for the executive department, and must accordingly pray that the pecuniary estimates for the station in which I am placed, may, during my continuance in it, be limited to such actual expenditures as the public good may be thought to require.



“Having thus imparted to you my sentiments, as they have been awakened by the occasion which brings us together, I shall take my present leave, but not without resorting once more to the benign Parent of the human race, in humble supplication, that since He has been pleased to favor the American people with opportunities for deliberating in perfect tranquillity and dispositions for deciding with unparalleled unanimity on a form of government for the security of their union and the advancement of their happiness, so his divine blessing may be equally conspicuous in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations, and the wise measures on which the success of his government must depend.”

This speech was read to Congress by the President himself. The practice of sending a message instead of reading the speech in person was introduced by President Jefferson, who did not appear to advantage as an orator, and it has been continued to the present time. The same persons who found fault with Washington's levees would probably have regarded the practice introduced by Washington as anti-republican, as it is practised by the sovereigns of Great Britain.

The executive departments which had existed under the confederation were necessarily continued until Congress should make new arrangements. Mr. Jay still acted as Secretary of Foreign Affairs, an office analogous to that which is now denominated Secretary of State, and General Knox as Secretary of War. The treasury was intrusted to a board of commissioners. Each of these at the request of the President furnished a full report of the state of the department respectively under their control. To the digesting, condensing, and studying of these, and of the diplomatic correspondence of the government since the

close of the war, Washington now devoted himself with unwearied attention.

Of the mode in which his daily life was now passed during the hours when not engaged in official duty, we gain a pleasing glimpse from the following extract from G. W. P. Custis' "Recollections and Private Memoirs of the Life and Character of Washington," as follows:

"In the then limited extent and improvement of the city there was some difficulty in selecting a mansion for the residence of the chief magistrate and a house suitable to his rank and station. Osgood's house, a mansion of very moderate extent, was at length fixed upon, situated in Cherry street.

"There the President became domiciled. His domestic family consisted of Mrs. Washington, the two adopted children, Mr. Lear, as principal secretary, Colonel Humphreys, with Messrs. Lewis and Nelson, secretaries, and Maj. William Jackson, aide-de-camp.

"Persons visiting the house in Cherry street at this time of day will wonder how a building so small could contain the many and mighty spirits that thronged its halls in olden days. Congress, cabinets, all public functionaries in the commencement of the government were selected from the very élite of the nation. Pure patriotism, commanding talent, eminent services, were the proud and indispensable requisites for official station in the first days of the Republic. The first Congress was a most enlightened and dignified body. In the Senate were several of the members of the Congress of 1776 and signers of the Declaration of Independence — Richard Henry Lee, who moved the Declaration, John Adams, who seconded it, with Sherman, Morris, Carroll, etc.

"The levees of the first President were attended by these illustrious patriots and statesmen, and by many other of

the patriots, statesmen, and soldiers, who could say of the Revolution, '*magna pars fui*,' while numbers of foreigners and strangers of distinction crowded to the seat of the general government, all anxious to witness the grand experiment that was to determine how much rational liberty mankind is capable of enjoying, without said liberty degenerating into licentiousness.

"Mrs Washington's drawing-rooms, on Friday nights, were attended by the grace and beauty of New York. On one of these occasions an incident occurred which might have been attended by serious consequences. Owing to the lowness of the ceiling in the drawing-room, the ostrich feather in the head-dress of Miss McIver, a belle of New York, took fire from the chandelier, to the no small alarm of the company. Major Jackson, aide-de-camp to the President, with great presence of mind and equal gallantry, flew to the rescue of the lady, and, by clapping the burning plumes between his hands, extinguished the flames, and the drawing-room went on as usual.

"Washington preserved the habit, as well in public as in private life, of rising at 4 o'clock and retiring to bed at 9. On Saturdays he rested somewhat from his labors by either riding into the country, attended by a groom, or with his family in his coach drawn by six horses.

"Fond of horses, the stables of the President were always in the finest order and his equipage excellent, both in taste and quality. Indeed, so long ago as the days of the vice-regal court of Lord Botetourt, at Williamsburg, in Virginia, we find that there existed a rivalry between the equipages of Colonel Byrd, a magnate of the old *régime*, and Colonel Washington—the grays against the bays. Bishop, the celebrated body-servant of Braddock, was the master of Washington's stables. And there were what was termed muslin horses in those days. At cock-

crow the stableboys were at work; at sunrise Bishop stalked into the stables, a muslin handkerchief in his hand, which he applied to the coats of the animals, and, if the slightest stain was perceptible upon the muslin, up went the luckless wights of the stableboys and punishment was administered instanter; for to the veteran Bishop, bred amid the iron discipline of European armies, mercy for anything like a breach of duty was altogether out of the question.

"The President's stables in Philadelphia were under the direction of German John, and the grooming of the white chargers will rather surprise the moderns. The night before the horses were expected to be rode they were covered entirely over with a paste, of which whiting was the principal component part; then the animals were swathed in body clothes and left to sleep upon clean straw. In the morning the composition had become hard, was well rubbed in, and curried and brushed, which process gave to the coats a beautiful, glossy, and satin-like appearance. The hoofs were then blacked and polished, the mouths washed, teeth picked and cleaned, and, the leopard-skin housings being properly adjusted, the white chargers were led out for service. Such was the grooming of ancient times.

"There was but one theater in New York in 1789 (in John street), and so small were its dimensions that the whole fabric might easily be placed on the stage of one of our modern theaters. Yet, humble as was the edifice, it possessed an excellent company of actors and actresses, including old Morris, who was the associate of Garrick, in the very outset of that great actor's career, at Goodman's Fields. The stage boxes were appropriated to the President and Vice-President, and were each of them decorated with emblems, trophies, etc. At the foot of the playbills

were always the words, '*Vivat Respublica.*' Washington often visited this theater, being particularly gratified by Wignell's performance of Darby, in the "Poor Soldier."

"It was in the theater in John street that the now national air of 'Hail Columbia,' then called the 'President's March,' was first played. It was composed by a German musician by the name of Fyles, the leader of the orchestra, in compliment to the President. The national air will last as long as the nation lasts, while the meritorious composer has been long since forgotten.

"It was while residing in Cherry street that the President was attacked by a severe illness that required a surgical operation. He was attended by the elder and younger Drs. Bard. The elder, being somewhat doubtful of his nerves, gave the knife to his son, bidding him 'cut away—deeper, deeper still; don't be afraid; you see how well he bears it.' Great anxiety was felt in New York at this time, as the President's case was considered extremely dangerous. Happily, the operation proved successful, and the patient's recovery removed all cause of alarm. During the illness a chain was stretched across the street and the sidewalks laid with straw. Soon after his recovery the President set out on his intended tour through the New England States.

"The President's mansion was so limited in accommodation that three of the secretaries were compelled to occupy one room—Humphreys, Lewis, and Nelson. Humphreys, aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief at Yorktown, was a most estimable man, and at the same time a poet. About this period he was composing his 'Widow of Malabac.' Lewis and Nelson, both young men, were content, after the labors of the day, to enjoy a good night's repose. But this was often denied them, for Humphreys, when in the vein, would rise from his

bed at any hour, and, with stentorian voice, recite his verses. The young men, roused from their slumbers, and rubbing their eyes, beheld a great burly figure, '*en chemise*,' striding across the floor, reciting, with great emphasis, particular passages from his poems, and calling on his room-mates for their approbation. Having, in this way, for a considerable time, 'murdered the sleep' of his associates, Humphreys, at length, wearied by his exertions, would sink upon his pillow in a kind of dreamy languor. So sadly were the young secretaries annoyed by the frequent outbursts of the poet's imagination that it was remarked of them by their friends, that, from 1789 to the end of their lives, neither Robert Lewis nor Thomas Nelson was ever known to evince the slightest taste for poetry."

Washington had hardly recovered from the severe attack of illness above referred to, when he heard of the death of his mother, who died on the 25th of August, 1789. He had paid her a visit just before leaving Mount Vernon for the seat of government. She was then residing at Fredericksburg, and was gradually sinking under a disease which was evidently mortal; and Washington, fully aware that he was seeing her for the last time, was much affected at the interview. She also felt that they were parting to meet no more in this world. "But she bade him go, with Heaven's blessing and her own, to fulfil the high destinies to which he had been called."

The mother of Washington was, in many respects, a remarkable woman. Her influence over her son in early life we have already had occasion to notice. In her last days she presents a true picture of matronly dignity. Mr. Custis states that she was continually visited and solaced, in the retirement of her declining years, by her children and numerous grandchildren. Her daughter, Mrs. Lewis,



repeatedly and earnestly solicited her to remove to her house and there pass the remainder of her days. Her son pressinglly entreated her that she would make Mount Vernon the home of her age. But the matron's answer was: "I thank you for your affectionate and dutiful offers, but my wants are few in this world and I feel perfectly competent to take care of myself." To the proposition of her son-in-law, Colonel Lewis, to relieve her by taking the direction of her concerns, she replied. "Do you, Fielding, keep my books in order, for your eyesight is better than mine; but leave the executive management to me." Such were the energy and independence she preserved to an age beyond that usually allotted to mortals, and till within three years of her death, when the disease under which she suffered (cancer of the breast) prevented exertion.

Her meeting with Washington, after the victory which decided the fortune of America, illustrates her character too strikingly to be omitted: "After an absence of nearly seven years it was, at length, on the return of the combined armies from Yorktown, permitted to the mother to see and embrace her illustrious son. So soon as he had dismounted, in the midst of a numerous and brilliant suite, he sent to apprise her of his arrival and to know when it would be her pleasure to receive him. And now, mark the force of early education and habits, and the superiority of the Spartan over the Persian schools, in this interview of the great Washington with his admirable parent and instructor. No pageantry of war proclaimed his coming — no trumpets sounded — no banners waved. Alone, and on foot, the Marshal of France, the General-in-Chief of the combined armies of France and America, the deliverer of his country, the hero of the age, repaired to pay his humble duty to her whom he venerated as the author of his being, the founder of his fortune and his fame. Full

well he knew that the matron was made of sterner stuff than to be moved by all the pride that glory ever gave or by all the "pomp and circumstance" of power.

"The lady was alone — her aged hands employed in the works of domestic industry — when the good news was announced, and it was further told that the victor chief was in waiting at the threshold. She welcomed him with a warm embrace, and by the well-remembered and endearing names of his childhood. Inquiring as to his health, she remarked the lines which mighty cares and many trials had made on his manly countenance, spoke much of old times and old friends, but of his glory, not one word!

"Meantime, in the village of Fredericksburg, all was joy and revelry. The town was crowded with the officers of the French and American armies, and with gentlemen from all the country around, who hastened to welcome the conquerors of Cornwallis. The citizens made arrangements for a splendid ball to which the mother of Washington was specially invited. She observed that although her dancing days were pretty well over she should feel happy in contributing to the general festivity, and consented to attend.

"The foreign officers were anxious to see the mother of their chief. They had heard indistinct rumors respecting her remarkable life and character, but, forming their judgment from European examples, they were prepared to expect in the mother that glare and show which would have been attached to the parents of the great in the old world. How were they surprised when the matron, leaning on the arm of her son, entered the room! She was arrayed in the very plain, yet becoming garb worn by the Virginia lady of the olden time. Her address, always dignified and imposing, was courteous though reserved. She received the complimentary attentions which were

profusely paid her without evincing the slightest elevation, and, at an early hour, wished the company much enjoyment of their pleasures, and observing that it was time for old people to be at home, retired, leaning as before on the arm of her son."

To this picture may be added another:

"The Marquis de Lafayette repaired to Fredericksburg, previous to his departure for Europe in the fall of 1784, to pay his parting respects to the mother, and to ask her blessing. Conducted by one of her grandsons he approached the house, when the young gentleman observed: 'There, sir, is my grandmother.' Lafayette beheld—working in the garden, clad in domestic-made clothes, and her gray head covered with a plain straw hat—the mother of 'his hero, his friend, and a country's preserver.' The lady saluted him, kindly observing: 'Ah, marquis! you see an old woman, but come, I can make you welcome to my poor dwelling without the parade of changing my dress.'"

To the encomiums lavished by the marquis on his chief, the mother replied: "I am not surprised at what George has done for he was always a very good boy." So simple, in her true greatness of soul, was this remarkable woman.

Her piety was ardent, and she associated devotion with the grand and beautiful in nature. She was in the habit of repairing every day for prayer to a secluded spot, formed by rocks and trees, near her dwelling.

The person of Mrs. Washington is described as being of the medium height and well proportioned—her features pleasing, though strongly marked. There were few painters in the Colonies in those days, and no portrait of her is in existence. Her biographer saw her but with infant eyes, but well remembered the sister of the chief. Of her we are told nothing, except that "she was a most

majestic woman and so strikingly like the brother that it was a matter of frolic to throw a cloak around her and place a military hat upon her head, and such was the perfect resemblance that had she appeared on her brother's steed, battalions would have presented arms, and senates risen to do homage to the chief."

Mrs. Washington died at the age of eighty-five, rejoicing in the consciousness of a life well spent, and the hope of a blessed immortality. Her ashes repose at Fredericksburg, where a splendid monument has been erected to her memory.\*

Deeply as Washington felt the loss of his estimable parent his attention was speedily withdrawn from his private and personal interests by the important political affairs which were pressing upon him. Congress were now fairly engaged in giving form and efficiency to the newly-created government.† The continued existence of the constitution itself was menaced by some of the States which had acceded to it, as well as by those who had refused to adopt it.

In some of the States a disposition to acquiesce in the decision which had been made, and to await the issue of a fair experiment of the constitution was avowed by the minority. In others the chagrin of defeat seemed to increase the original hostility to the instrument, and serious fears were entertained by its friends that a second general

\* Mrs. Ellet, "Women of the Revolution."

† One of the first topics of debate in Congress was the title by which the President should be addressed. Such title as "His Highness," "His Mightiness," etc., having been discussed, it was finally and very properly determined that the title of "President of the United States" should be used; and it was accordingly used in the answers to the inaugural address. No title could be more dignified.

convention might pluck from it the most essential of its powers before their value and the safety with which they might be confided where they were placed could be ascertained by experience.

From the same cause exerting itself in a different direction the friends of the new system had been still more alarmed. In all those States where the opposition was sufficiently formidable to inspire a hope of success, the effort was made to fill the Legislature with the declared enemies of the government and thus to commit it, in its infancy, to the custody of its foes. Their fears were quieted for the present. In both branches of the Legislature the Federalists, an appellation at that time distinguishing those who had supported the constitution, formed the majority, and it soon appeared that a new convention was too bold an experiment to be applied for by the requisite number of States.

But two States, Rhode Island and North Carolina, still remained out of the pale of the Union, and a great deal of ill humor existed among those who were included within it, which increased the necessity of circumspection in those who administered the government.

To the western parts of the continent the attention of the Executive was attracted by discontents which were displayed with some violence, and which originated in circumstances and in interests peculiar to that country.

Spain, in possession of the mouth of the Mississippi, had refused to permit the citizens of the United States to follow its waters into the ocean, and had occasionally tolerated or interdicted their commerce to New Orleans, as had been suggested by the supposed interest or caprice of the Spanish government or of its representatives in America. The eyes of the inhabitants adjacent to the waters which emptied into that river were turned down it as the only

channel through which the surplus produce of their luxuriant soil could be conveyed to the markets of the world. Believing that the future wealth and prosperity of their country depended on the use of that river they gave some evidence of a disposition to drop from the Confederacy, if this valuable acquisition could not otherwise be made. This temper could not fail to be viewed with interest by the neighboring powers, who had been encouraged by it and by the imbecility of the government, to enter into intrigues of an alarming nature.

Previous to his departure from Mount Vernon Washington had received intelligence, too authentic to be disregarded, of private machinations, by real or pretended agents both of Spain and Great Britain, which were extremely hostile to the peace and to the integrity of the Union.

Spain had intimated that the navigation of the Mississippi could never be conceded while the inhabitants of the western country remained connected with the Atlantic States, but might be freely granted to them if they should form an independent empire.

On the other hand a gentleman from Canada, whose ostensible business was to repossess himself of some lands on the Ohio which had been formerly granted to him, frequently discussed the vital importance of the navigation of the Mississippi, and privately assured several individuals of great influence that if they were disposed to assert their rights he was authorized by Lord Dorchester, the Governor of Canada, to say that they might rely confidently on his assistance. With the aid it was in his power to give they might seize New Orleans, fortify the Balize at the mouth of the Mississippi, and maintain themselves in that place against the utmost efforts of Spain.\*

\* Marshall.



The probability of failing in any attempt to hold the mouth of the Mississippi by force, and the resentments against Great Britain which prevailed generally throughout the western country, diminished the danger to be apprehended from any machinations of that power, but against those of Spain the same security did not exist.

In contemplating the situation of the United States in their relations not purely domestic the object demanding most immediate consideration was the hostility of several tribes of Indians. The military strength of the nations who inhabited the country between the lakes, the Mississippi, and the Ohio was computed at 5,000 men, of whom about 1,500 were at open war with the United States. Treaties had been concluded with the residue, but the warlike disposition of the Indians, and the provocations they had received, furnished reasons for apprehending that these treaties would soon be broken.

In the South the Creeks, who could bring into the field 6,000 fighting men, were at war with Georgia. In the mind of their leader, M'Gillivray, the son of a white man, some irritation had been produced by the confiscation of the lands of his father who had resided in that State, and several other refugees, whose property had also been confiscated, contributed still further to exasperate the nation. But the immediate point in contest between them was a tract of land on the Oconee, which the State of Georgia claimed under a purchase, the validity of which was denied by the Indians.

The regular force of the United States was less than 600 men.

Not only the policy of accommodating differences by negotiation which the government was in no condition to terminate by the sword, but a real respect for the rights of the natives and a regard for the claims of justice and

humanity, disposed Washington to endeavor, in the first instance, to remove every cause of quarrel by a treaty, and his message to Congress on this subject evidenced his preference of pacific measures.

Possessing many valuable articles of commerce for which the best market was often found on the coast of the Mediterranean, struggling to export them in their own bottoms, and unable to afford a single gun for their protection, the Americans could not view with unconcern the dispositions which were manifested toward them by the Barbary powers. A treaty had been formed with the Emperor of Morocco, but from Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli peace had not been purchased, and those regencies considered all as enemies to whom they had not sold their friendship. The unprotected vessels of America presented a tempting object to their rapacity, and their hostility was the more terrible, because by their public law prisoners became slaves.

The United States were at peace with all the powers of Europe, but controversies of a delicate nature existed with some of them, the adjustment of which required a degree of moderation and firmness which there was reason to fear might not, in every instance, be exhibited.

The apprehensions with which Spain had contemplated the future strength of the United States, and the consequent disposition to restrict them to narrow limits, have been already noticed. After the conclusion of the war the attempt to form a treaty with that power had been repeated, but no advance toward an agreement on the points of difference between the two governments had been made.

Circumstances attending the points of difference with Great Britain were still more serious, because, in their progress, a temper unfavorable to accommodation had been uniformly displayed.

The resentments produced by the various calamities war had occasioned were not terminated with their cause. The idea that Great Britain was the natural enemy of America had become habitual. Believing it impossible for that nation to have relinquished its views of conquest, many found it difficult to bury their animosities and to act upon the sentiment contained in the Declaration of Independence, "to hold them as the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends." In addition to the complaints respecting the violation of the treaty of peace events were continually supplying this temper with fresh aliment. The disinclination which the cabinet of London had discovered to a commercial treaty with the United States was not attributed exclusively to the cause which had been assigned for it. It was in part ascribed to that jealousy with which Britain was supposed to view the growing trade of America.

The general restrictions on commerce by which every maritime power sought to promote its own navigation, and that part of the European system in particular by which each aimed at a monopoly of the trade of its Colonies, were felt with peculiar keenness when enforced by England. In this suspicious temper almost every unfavorable event which occurred was traced up to British hostility.

That an attempt to form a commercial treaty with Portugal had failed, was attributed to the influence of the cabinet of London, and to the machinations of the same power were also ascribed the danger from the corsairs of Barbary and the bloody incursions of the Indians. The resentment excited by these causes was felt by a large proportion of the American people, and the expression of it was common and public. That correspondent dispositions existed in England is by no means improbable, and the necessary effect of this temper was to increase the diffi-

culty of adjusting the differences between the two nations.

With France the most perfect harmony subsisted. Those attachments which originated in the signal services received from the King of France during the war of the Revolution had sustained no diminution. Yet, from causes which it was found difficult to counteract, the commercial intercourse between the two nations was not so extensive as had been expected. It was the interest and, of consequence, the policy of France, to avail herself of the misunderstandings between the United States and Great Britain, in order to obtain such regulations as might gradually divert the increasing trade of the American continent from those channels in which it had been accustomed to flow, and a disposition was felt throughout the United States to co-operate with her in enabling her merchants, by legislative encouragements, to rival those of Britain in the American market.

A great revolution had commenced in that country, the first stage of which was completed by limiting the powers of the monarch, and by the establishment of a popular assembly. In no part of the globe was this revolution hailed with more joy than in America. The influence it would have on the affairs of the world was not then distinctly foreseen, and the philanthropist, without becoming a political partisan, rejoiced in the event. On this subject, therefore, but one sentiment existed.

The relations of the United States with the other powers of Europe did not require particular attention. Their dispositions were rather friendly than otherwise, and an inclination was generally manifested to participate in the advantages which the erection of an independent empire on the western shores of the Atlantic held forth to the commercial world.

By the ministers of foreign powers in America it would readily be supposed that the first steps taken by the new government would not only be indicative of its present system, but would probably affect its foreign relations permanently, and that the influence of the President would be felt in the Legislature. Scarcely was the exercise of his executive functions commenced when Washington received an application from the Count de Moustiers, the minister of France, requesting a private conference. On being told that the Department of Foreign Affairs was the channel through which all official business should pass, the count replied that the interview he requested was not for the purpose of actual business, but rather as preparatory to its future transaction.

The next day, at 1 in the afternoon, was named for the interview. The count commenced the conversation with declarations of his personal regard for America, the manifestations of which, he said, had been early and uniform. His nation, too, was well disposed to be upon terms of amity with the United States, but at his public reception there were occurrences which he thought indicative of coolness in the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, who had, he feared, while in Europe, imbibed prejudices, not only against Spain, but against France also. If this conjecture should be right the present head of that department could not be an agreeable organ of intercourse with the President. He then took a view of the modern usages of European courts, which, he said, favored the practice he recommended, of permitting foreign ministers to make their communications directly to the chief of the executive. "He then presented a letter," says Washington in his private journal, "which he termed confidential, and to be considered as addressed to me in my private character, which was too strongly marked with an intention, as well as a wish, to have no

person between the minister and President in the transaction of business between the two nations."

In reply to these observations Washington assured him that, judging from his own feelings and from the public sentiment, there existed in America a reciprocal disposition to be on the best terms with France. That whatever former difficulties might have occurred he was persuaded the Secretary of Foreign Affairs had offered no intentional disrespect either to the minister or to his nation. Without undertaking to know the private opinions of Mr. Jay he would declare that he had never heard that officer express, directly or indirectly, any sentiment unfavorable to either.

Reason and usage, he added, must direct the mode of treating national and official business. If rules had been established they must be conformed to. If they were yet to be framed it was hoped that they would be convenient and proper. So far as ease could be made to comport with regularity and with necessary forms, it ought to be consulted, but custom, and the dignity of office, were not to be disregarded. The conversation continued upward of an hour, but no change was made in the resolution of the President.

During its first session the national Legislature was principally occupied in providing revenues for the long-exhausted treasury, in establishing a judiciary, in organizing the executive departments in detail, and in framing amendments to the constitution, agreeably to the suggestion of the President. The members immediately entered upon the exercise of those powers so long refused under the articles of confederation. They imposed a tonnage duty, as well as duties on various imported articles, steadily keeping in sight, however, the navigating interest of the country, which had hitherto been almost wholly at the mercy of other nations. Higher tonnage duties were im-



posed on foreign than on American bottoms, and goods imported in vessels belonging to citizens of the United States paid 10 per cent. less duty than the same goods brought in those owned by foreigners. These discriminating duties were intended to counteract the commercial regulations of foreign nations and to encourage American shipping. To aid in the management of the affairs of government three executive departments were established, styled Departments of War, Foreign Affairs, and of the Treasury, with a secretary at the head of each.

The heads of these departments, in addition to the duties specially assigned them, were intended to constitute a council, to be consulted by the President whenever he thought proper, and the Executive was authorized by the constitution to require the opinion, in writing, of the principal officers in the executive departments, on subjects relating to the duties of their offices. In framing the acts constituting these offices and defining their duties, it became an important subject of inquiry in what manner or by whom these important officers could be removed from office. This was a question as new as it was momentous and was applicable to all officers of executive appointment. In the long and learned debates on the subject in Congress, there arose a very animated opposition to such a construction of the constitution as to give this power to any one individual. Whatever confidence might be placed in the chief magistrate then at the head of the government, equal confidence could not be expected in his successors, and it was contended that a concurrence of the Senate was as necessary and proper in the removal of a person from office as in his appointment. Some of the members of the House of Representatives were of opinion that they could not be removed without impeachment. The principal question, however, on which Con-

gress was divided, was, whether they were removable by the President alone, or by the President in concurrence with the Senate. A majority, however, in both houses, decided that this power was in the President alone. In the House, the majority in favor of this construction was twelve. This decision of a great constitutional question has been acquiesced in, and in its consequences has been of greater importance than almost any other since the establishment of the new government. From the manner in which this power has been exercised, it has given a tone and character to the executive branch of the government not contemplated, it is believed, by the framers of the constitution or by those who constituted the first Congress under it. It has greatly increased the influence and patronage of the President and in no small degree made him the center around which the other branches of the government revolve.\*

In a free country, where the private citizen has both the right and the inclination to take an interest in the public concerns, it is natural that political parties and civil contentions should arise. These will be more or less violent, angry, and hostile, according as a sense of common security from external dangers leaves no cause for united action, and little anxiety for the common peace. A natural consequence of this strife of parties is the exercise of the passions — pride, interest, vanity, resentment, gratitude — each contributing its share in irritating and prolonging the controversy. In the beginning of the Revolution, the people of the United States divided themselves into the two great classes of Whigs and Tories; then they again separated upon the question of absolute independence. Other questions arose during the war, relative to its conduct, and the qualifications of the

\* Pitkin.

leaders of the army. Independence achieved, the minds of the people were agitated about the nature of the government, which all saw to be necessary for their own happiness, and for the better enabling them to prosecute with foreign countries peaceful negotiations or the operations of war. Many saw, in too close a union, dangers as great and consequences as distasteful as in their entire separation. It was believed by many that the extent of the country, the great diversity of character, habits, and pursuits among the several States, presented insuperable obstacles to a closer union than that afforded by the articles of confederation. Some were almost exclusively commercial, others agricultural; some were disposed to engage in manufacturing pursuits; some had domestic slavery firmly connected with their domestic relations and were disposed to look favorably on the extension of the institution; others regarded involuntary servitude as a curse, and desired its abolition.

It was not to be wondered at, that with such points of diversity, many should suppose that a single government could not administer the affairs of all, except by a greater delegation of power than would be submitted to by the American people. While some looked wholly to these apprehended consequences of a close union and a single government, others chiefly regarded the dangers arising from disunion, domestic dissensions, and even war. One party dreaded consolidation; the other, anarchy and separation. Each saw, in the object of its dread, the destruction of good government, though one party looked too exclusively to its characteristic of order, the other to that of civil liberty. These were the thoughts of the people, widely different, but all equally honest. But the politicians addressed themselves to these prejudices, often with unworthy motives. Local prejudices, self-interest, fears, in

some cases from an anticipated loss of consequence, in the event of a transfer of sovereignty from the individual States to the general government, all combined to make many violent in their expressions of opposition to the plan. Apprehensions of violence and disorder, and fears from individual popularity in a circumscribed sphere, led others to desire consolidation. With these, ranked others who were fond of the pomp and show of authority which would attend a powerful government; and still others, who, having claims upon the country, supposed that they would have much stronger hopes of being paid themselves and of seeing the debts due abroad liquidated if a system of government were established which could be certain to raise a revenue for these objects. On the formation of the constitution, the community settled down into two great parties, Federalists and Anti-Federalists, or Democrats; the first believing that the most imminent danger to our peace and prosperity was in disunion, and that popular jealousy, always active, would withhold the power which was essential to good order and national safety; the other party believing that the danger most to be apprehended was in too close a union, and that their most powerful opponents wished a consolidated and even a monarchical government.

There were many who had been accustomed to reflect upon government and political relations previously to the war of independence, when the constitution of Great Britain being by far the best that had ever existed, they may naturally be supposed to have conceived for it a degree of homage and respect which it could not now inspire. The speculations on political rights, to which the contest with Great Britain and the debates on the question of independence gave rise, greatly favored the doctrines of political equality and the hatred of power in any form

that could control the public will. There are, in the heart of every man, principles which readily prepare him for republican doctrines, and after a few years some of the speculative politicians began to think that the free, simple, and equal government which was suited to the tastes and habits of our people, was also the best in theory. The great body of the people were partial to the form of government to which they had been accustomed and wished for none other, though the leading statesmen differed upon this point. Some preferred the republican form in theory and believed that no other would be tolerated in practice, and others regretted that they were obliged to yield so far to popular prejudice as to forego the form they deemed best, but determined to avail themselves of every opportunity of improving the existing government into that form. Nor were they without hopes that by siding with the general government in every question of power between that and the separate States, and with the Executive in all questions between that and the Legislature, and by continually increasing the patronage of the executive by means of an army, a navy, and the multiplication of civil officers, they would ultimately obtain their object.\*

It was in the midst of this society, so agitated and disturbed, that Washington, without ambition, without any false show, from a sense of duty rather than inclination and rather trusting in truth than confident of success, undertook actually to found the government decreed by the new-born constitution. He rose to his high office invested with an immense influence, which was acknowledged and received even by his enemies.

Washington's natural inclination, says Guizot,† was

\* Tucker's "Life of Jefferson."

† "Essay on the Character and Influence of Washington."

rather to a democratic social state than to any other. Of a mind just rather than expansive, of a temper wise and calm, full of dignity, but free from all selfish and arrogant pretensions — coveting rather respect than power — the impartiality of democratic principles and the simplicity of democratic manners, far from offending or annoying him, suited his tastes and satisfied his judgment. He did not trouble himself with inquiring whether more elaborate combinations, a division into ranks, privileges, and artificial barriers, were necessary to the preservation of society. He lived tranquilly in the midst of an equal and sovereign people, finding its authority to be lawful and submitting to it without effort.

But when the question was one of political and not social order, when the discussion turned upon the organization of the government, he was strongly federal, opposed to local and popular pretensions and the declared advocate of the unity and force of the central power.

He placed himself under this standard and did so to insure its triumph. But still his elevation was not the victory of a party and awakened in no one either exultation or regret. In the eyes, not only of the public, but of his enemies, he was not included in any party and was above them all: "the only man in the United States," said Jefferson, "who possessed the confidence of all; — \* \* \* there was no other one who was considered as anything more than a party leader."

It was his constant effort to maintain this honorable privilege. "It is really my wish to have my mind and my actions, which are the result of reflection, as free and independent as the air. \* \* \* If it should be my inevitable fate to administer the government, I will go to chair under no pre-engagement of any kind or nature whatsoever. \* \* \* Should anything tending to give



me anxiety present itself in this or any other publication, I shall never undertake the painful task of recrimination, nor do I know that I should ever enter upon my justification.

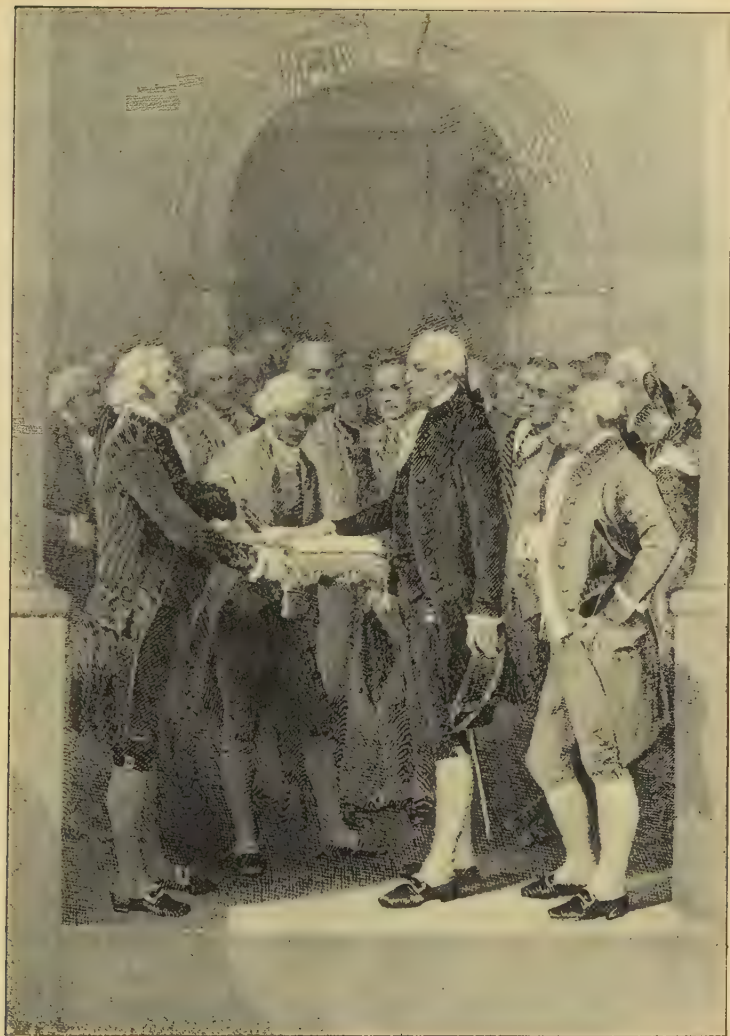
\* \* \* All else is but food for declamation. \* \* \*

Men's minds are as various as their faces, and, where the motives of their actions are pure, the operations of the former are no more to be imputed to them as a crime than the appearance of the latter. \* \* \* Differences in political opinions are as unavoidable, as, to a certain point, they may, perhaps, be necessary."\* A stranger also to all personal disputes, to the passions and prejudices of his friends, as well as his enemies, the purpose of his whole policy was to maintain this position and to this policy he gave the true name, "the just medium!"

It is much, continues the great statesman of France, to have the wish to preserve a just medium; but the wish, though accompanied with firmness and ability, is not always enough to secure it. Washington succeeded in this as much by the natural turn of his mind and character as by making it his peculiar aim; he was, indeed, really of no party, and his country in esteeming him so, did no more than pay homage to truth

A man of experience and a man of action, he had an admirable wisdom, and made no pretension to systematic theories. He took no side beforehand; he made no show of the principles that were to govern him. Thus, there was nothing like a logical harshness in his conduct, no commital of self-love, no struggle of rival talent. When he obtained the victory, his success was not to his adversaries either a stake lost or a sweeping sentence of condemnation. It was not on the ground of the superiority of his own mind that he triumphed, but on the ground of the nature

\* "Washington's Writings," vols. IX, X.



*Livingston, St. Clair, Otis, Knox, Sherman, Washington, Steuben, Adams.*  
*INAUGURATION OF WASHINGTON.*



of things and of the inevitable necessity that accompanied them. Still, his success was not an event without a moral character, the simple result of skill, strength, or fortune. Uninfluenced by any theory he had faith in truth and adopted it as the guide of his conduct. He did not pursue the victory of one opinion against the partisans of another; neither did he act from interest in the event alone, or merely for success. He did nothing which he did not think to be reasonable and just; so that his conduct, which had no systematic character that might be humbling to his adversary, had still a moral character which commanded respect.

Men had, moreover, the most thorough conviction of his disinterestedness, that great light to which men so willingly trust their fate; that vast power which draws after it their hearts, while at the same time it gives them confidence that their interests will not be surrendered, either as a sacrifice or as instruments to selfishness and ambition. A striking proof of his impartiality was afforded in the choice of the persons who were to form his cabinet under the law for the formation of the executive departments.

The government being completely organized and a system of revenue established, the important duty of filling the offices which had been created remained to be performed. In the execution of this delicate trust the purest virtue and the most impartial judgment were exercised by Washington in selecting the best talents and the greatest weight of character which the United States could furnish. The unmingled patriotism of the motives by which he was actuated, receives its clearest demonstration from a view of all his private letters on this subject, and the success of his endeavors is attested by the abilities and reputation which he drew into the public service.

At the head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, since denominated the Department of State, he placed Jefferson, who had been bred to the bar, and at an early period of life had acquired considerable reputation for extensive attainments in the science of politics. He had been a distinguished member of the Second Congress and had been offered a diplomatic appointment, which he had declined. Withdrawing from the administration of Continental affairs, he had been elected Governor of Virginia, which office he filled for two years. He afterwards again represented his native State in the councils of the Union, and in the year 1874 was appointed to succeed Dr. Franklin at the court of Versailles. In that station he had acquitted himself much to the public satisfaction. His "Notes on Virginia," which were read with applause, were believed to evince the soundness of his political opinions, and the Declaration of Independence was universally ascribed to his pen. He had long been placed by America amongst the most eminent of her citizens, and had long been classed by the President with those who were most capable of serving the nation. Having lately obtained permission to return for a short time to the United States, he was, while on his passage, nominated to this important office, and, on his arrival in Virginia, found a letter from the President, giving him the option of becoming the Secretary of Foreign Affairs or of retaining his station at the court of Versailles. He appears rather to have inclined to continue in his foreign appointment, and, in changing his situation, to have consulted the wishes of the first magistrate more than the preference of his own mind.\*

The task of restoring public credit, of drawing order and arrangement from the chaotic confusion in which the

\* Marshall.

finances of America were involved, and of devising means which should render the revenue productive and commensurate with the demand, in a manner least burdensome to the people, was justly classed among the most arduous of the duties which devolved on the new government. In discharging it, much aid was expected from the head of the treasury. This important, and at that time, intricate department, was assigned to Colonel Hamilton.

This gentleman was a native of the Island of St. Croix, and at a very early period of life had been placed by his friends in New York. Possessing an ardent temper, he caught fire from the concussions of the moment, and, with all the enthusiasm of youth, engaged first his pen, and afterwards his sword in the stern contest between the American Colonies and their parent State. Among the first troops raised by New York was a corps of artillery, in which he was appointed a captain. Soon after the war was transferred to the Hudson, his superior endowments recommended him to the attention of the Commander-in-Chief, into whose family, before completing his twenty-first year, he was invited to enter. Equally brave and intelligent, he continued in this situation to display a degree of firmness and capacity which commanded the confidence and esteem of his general and of the principal officers in the army.

After the capitulation at Yorktown, the war languished throughout the American continent and the probability that its termination was approaching daily increased.

The critical circumstances of the existing government rendered the events of the civil more interesting than those of the military department, and Colonel Hamilton accepted a seat in the Congress of the United States. In all the important acts of the day he performed a conspicuous part, and was greatly distinguished among those distinguished



men whom the crisis had attracted to the councils of their country. He had afterwards been active in promoting those measures which led to the convention at Philadelphia, of which he was a member, and had greatly contributed to the adoption of the constitution by the State of New York. In the pre-eminent part he had performed, both in the military and civil transactions of his country, he had acquired a great degree of well-merited fame, and the frankness of his manners, the openness of his temper, the warmth of his feelings, and the sincerity of his heart, had secured him many valuable friends.

To talents equally splendid and useful he united a patient industry, not always the companion of genius, which fitted him, in a peculiar manner, for subduing the difficulties to be encountered by the man who should be placed at the head of the American finances.\*

The Department of War was already filled by General Knox, and he was again nominated to it.

Throughout the contest of the Revolution this officer had continued at the head of the American artillery, and from being the colonel of a regiment, had been promoted to the rank of a major-general. In this important station he had preserved a high military character, and on the resignation of General Lincoln had been appointed Secretary of War. To his past services and to unquestionable integrity, he was admitted to unite a sound understanding, and the public judgment, as well as that of the chief magistrate, pronounced him in all respects competent to the station he filled.

The office of attorney-general was filled by Edmund Randolph. To a distinguished reputation in the line of his profession, this gentleman added a considerable degree of

\* Marshall.

political eminence. After having been for several years the attorney-general of Virginia, he had been elected its Governor. While in this office he was chosen a member of the convention which framed the constitution, and was also elected to that which was called by the State for its adoption or rejection. After having served at the head of the executive the term permitted by the constitution of the State, he entered into its Legislature, where he preserved a great share of influence.

Such was the first cabinet council of the President. In its composition, public opinion as well as intrinsic worth had been consulted, and a high degree of character had been combined with real talent.

In the selection of persons for high judicial offices, the President was guided by the same principles. At the head of this department he placed John Jay.

From the commencement of the Revolution this gentleman had filled a large space in the public mind. Remaining, without intermission, in the service of his country, he had passed through a succession of high offices, and in all of them had merited the approbation of his fellow-citizens. To his pen, while in Congress, America was indebted for some of those masterly addresses which reflected most honor upon the government, and to his firmness and penetration was to be ascribed, in no inconsiderable degree, the happy issue of those intricate negotiations which were conducted, toward the close of the war, at Madrid and at Paris. On returning to the United States he had been appointed Secretary of Foreign Affairs, in which station he had conducted himself with his accustomed ability. A sound judgment improved by extensive reading and great knowledge of public affairs, unyielding firmness, and inflexible integrity, were qualities of which Mr. Jay had given frequent and signal proofs. Although for some years

withdrawn from that profession to which he was bred, the acquisitions of his early life had not been lost, and the subjects on which his mind had been exercised were not entirely foreign from those which would, in the first instance, employ the courts in which he was to preside.

John Rutledge of South Carolina, James Wilson of Pennsylvania, William Cushing of Massachusetts, Robert Harrison of Maryland, and John Blair of Virginia, were nominated as associate justices. Some of these gentlemen had filled the highest law offices in their respective States, and all of them had received distinguished marks of the public confidence.

In the systems which had been adopted by the several States, offices corresponding to those created by the revenue laws of Congress had been already established. Uninfluenced by considerations of personal regard, Washington could not be induced to change men whom he found in place, if worthy of being employed, and where the man who had filled such office in the former state of things was unexceptionable in his conduct and character he was uniformly reappointed. In deciding between competitors for vacant offices the law he prescribed for his government was to regard the fitness of candidates for the duties they would be required to discharge, and, where an equality in this respect existed, former merits and sufferings in the public service gave claims to preference which could not be overlooked.

In the legislative, as well as in the executive and judicial departments, great respectability of character was also associated with an eminent degree of talents. The constitutional prohibition to appoint any member of the Legislature to an office created during the time for which he had been elected did not exclude men of the most distinguished abilities from the First Congress. Impelled by

an anxious solicitude respecting the first measures of the government its zealous friends had pressed into its service, and, in both branches of the Legislature, men were found who possessed the fairest claims to the public confidence.

From the duties attached to his office the Vice-President of the United States and President of the Senate, though not a member of the Legislature, was classed, in the public mind, with that department not less than with the executive. Elected by the whole people of America in common with the President he could not fail to be taken from the most distinguished citizens and to add to the dignity of the body over which he presided.

John Adams was one of the earliest and most ardent patriots of the Revolution. Bred to the bar, he had necessarily studied the constitution of his country and was among the most determined assertors of its rights. Active in guiding that high spirit which animated all New England, he became a member of the Congress of 1774 and was among the first who dared to avow sentiments in favor of independence. In that body he soon attained considerable eminence, and, at an early stage of the war, was chosen one of the commissioners to whom the interests of the United States in Europe were confided. In his diplomatic character he had contributed greatly to those measures which drew Holland into the war; had negotiated the treaty between the United States and the Dutch Republic, and had, at critical points of time, obtained loans of money which were of great advantage to his country. In the negotiations which terminated the war he had also rendered important services, and, after the ratification of the definitive articles of peace, had been deputed to Great Britain for the purpose of effecting a commercial treaty with that nation. The political situation of America having rendered this object unattainable he solicited leave to

return, and arrived in the United States soon after the adoption of the constitution.

As a statesman John Adams had at all times ranked high in the estimation of his countrymen. He had improved a sound understanding by extensive political and historical reading, and perhaps no American had reflected more profoundly on the subject of government. The exalted opinion he entertained of his own country was flattering to his fellow-citizens, and the purity of his mind, the unblemished integrity of a life spent in the public service, had gained him their confidence.

A government, supported in all its departments by so much character and talent, at the head of which was placed a man whose capacity was undoubted, whose life had been one great and continued lesson of disinterested patriotism, and for whom almost every bosom glowed with an attachment bordering on enthusiasm, could not fail to make a rapid progress in conciliating the affection of the people. That all hostility to the constitution should subside, that public measures should receive universal approbation, that no particular disgusts and individual irritations should be excited, were expectations which could not reasonably be indulged. Exaggerated accounts were indeed occasionally circulated of the pomp and splendor which were affected by certain high officers of the monarchical tendencies of particular institutions and of the dispositions which prevailed to increase the powers of the executive. That the doors of the Senate were closed and that a disposition had been manifested by that body to distinguish the President of the United States by a title, gave considerable umbrage, and were represented as evincing inclinations in that branch of the Legislature unfriendly to republicanism. The exorbitance of salaries was also a subject of some declamation, and the equality of commercial privileges

with which foreign bottoms entered American ports, was not free from objection. But the apprehensions of danger to liberty from the new system, which had been impressed on the minds of well-meaning men, were visibly wearing off; the popularity of the administration was communicating itself to the government, and the materials with which the discontented were furnished could not yet be efficaciously employed.

Toward the close of the session a report on a petition which had been presented at an early period by the creditors of the public residing in the State of Pennsylvania was taken up in the House of Representatives. Though many considerations rendered a postponement of this interesting subject necessary two resolutions were passed: the one, "declaring that the House considered an adequate provision for the support of the public credit, as a matter of high importance to the national honor and prosperity," and the other, directing "the Secretary of the Treasury to prepare a plan for that purpose, and to report the same to the House at its next meeting."

On the 29th of September (1789) Congress adjourned to the first Monday in the succeeding January (1790).

Throughout the whole of this laborious and important session perfect harmony subsisted between the executive and the Legislature, and no circumstance occurred which threatened to impair it. The modes of communication between the departments of government were adjusted in a satisfactory manner, and arrangements were made on some of those delicate points in which the Senate participate of executive power.

Washington's own views of the proceedings of Congress are expressed in the following extract from a letter to a friend:

"That Congress does not proceed with all that dispatch



which people at a distance expect, and which, were they to hurry business, they possibly might, is not to be denied. That measures have been agitated which are not pleasing to Virginia — and others, pleasing perhaps to her, but not to some other States — is equally unquestionable. Can it well be otherwise in a country so extensive, so diversified in its interests? And will not these different interests naturally produce — in an assembly of representatives who are to legislate for, and to assimilate and reconcile them to, the general welfare — long, warm, and animated debates? Most assuredly they will, and if there was the same propensity in mankind for investigating the motives as there is for censuring the conduct of public characters, it would be found that the censure so freely bestowed is oftentimes unmerited and uncharitable. For instance, the condemnation of Congress for sitting only four hours in the day. The fact is, by the established rules of the House of Representatives, no committee can sit whilst the House is sitting, and that is, and has been for a considerable time, from 10 o'clock in the forenoon until 3, often later, in the afternoon, before and after which the business is going on in committees. If this application is not as much as most constitutions are equal to, I am mistaken.

“Many other things, which undergo malignant constructions, would be found, upon a candid examination, to wear a better face than is given to them. The misfortune is that the enemies to the government, always more active than its friends and always upon the watch to give it a stroke, neglect no opportunity to aim one. If they tell truth it is not the whole truth, by which means one side only of the picture is exhibited, whereas, if both sides were seen it might, and probably would, assume a different form in the opinion of just and candid men, who are disposed to measure matters by a continental scale.

“ I do not mean, however, from what I have here said, to justify the conduct of Congress in all its movements, for some of these movements, in my opinion, have been injudicious, and others unreasonable ; whilst the questions of assumption, residence, and other matters, have been agitated with a warmth and intemperance, with prolixity and threats, which, it is to be feared, have lessened the dignity of that body and decreased that respect which was once entertained for it. And this misfortune is increased by many members, even among those who wish well to the government, ascribing, in letters to their respective States, when they are defeated in a favorite measure, the worst motives for the conduct of their opponents, who, viewing matters through another medium, may and do retort in their turn, by which means jealousies and distrusts are spread most impolitically far and wide, and will, it is to be feared, have a most unhappy tendency to injure our public affairs, which, if wisely managed, might make us, as we are now by Europeans thought to be, the happiest people upon earth.”

Anxious to visit New England to observe in person the condition of the country and the dispositions of the people toward the government and its measures, the President was disposed to avail himself of the short respite from official cares afforded by the recess of Congress, to make a tour through the eastern States. His resolution being taken and the executive business which required his immediate personal attendance being dispatched, he commenced his tour on the 15th of October (1789), and, passing through Connecticut and Massachusetts, as far as Portsmouth in New Hampshire, returned by a different route to New York, where he arrived on the 13th of November.

With this visit the President had much reason to be

satisfied. To contemplate the theater on which many interesting military scenes had been exhibited, and to review the ground on which his first campaign as Commander-in-Chief of the American army had been made, were sources of rational delight. To observe the progress of society, the improvements in agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, and the temper, circumstances, and dispositions of the people, could not fail to be grateful to an intelligent mind, and an employment in all respects worthy of the chief magistrate of the nation. The reappearance of their general in the high station he now filled brought back to recollection the perilous transactions of the war, and the reception universally given to him attested the unabated love which was felt for his person and character, and indicated unequivocally the growing popularity, at least in that part of the Union, of the government he administered.

The sincerity and warmth with which he reciprocated the affection expressed for his person in the addresses presented to him was well calculated to preserve the sentiments which were generally diffused. "I rejoice with you, my fellow-citizens," said he in answer to an address from the inhabitants of Boston, "in every circumstance that declares your prosperity, and I do so most cordially, because you have well deserved to be happy.

"Your love of liberty, your respect for the law, your habits of industry, and your practice of the moral and religious obligations, are the strongest claims to national and individual happiness; and they will, I trust, be firmly and lastingly established."

But the interchange of sentiments with the companions of his military toils and glory will excite most interest, because on both sides the expressions were dictated by the purest and most delicious feelings of the human heart.

From the Cincinnati of Massachusetts he received the following address:

“Amidst the various gratulations which your arrival in this metropolis has occasioned, permit us, the members of the Society of the Cincinnati in this commonwealth, most respectfully to assure you of the ardor of esteem and affection you have so indelibly fixed in our hearts, as our glorious leader in war and illustrious example in peace.

“After the solemn and endearing farewell on the banks of the Hudson, which our anxiety presaged as final, most peculiarly pleasing is the present unexpected meeting. On this occasion we cannot avoid the recollection of the various scenes of toil and danger through which you conducted us, and while we contemplate various trying periods of the war, and the triumphs of peace, we rejoice to behold you, induced by the unanimous voice of your country, entering upon other trials and other services alike important, and, in some points of view, equally hazardous. For the completion of the great purposes which a grateful country has assigned you, long, very long, may your invaluable life be preserved. And as the admiring world, while considering you as a soldier, have long wanted a comparison, may your virtue and talents as a statesman leave them without a parallel.

“It is not in words to express an attachment founded like ours. We can only say that, when soldiers, our greatest pride was a promptitude of obedience to your orders; as citizens, our supreme ambition is to maintain the character of firm supporters of that noble fabric of Federal government over which you preside.

“As members of the Society of the Cincinnati it will be our endeavor to cherish those sacred principles of charity and fraternal attachment which our institution inculcates. And while our conduct is thus regulated, we can never

want the patronage of the first of patriots and the best of men."

To this address the following answer was returned:

"In reciprocating with gratitude and sincerity the multiplied and affecting gratulations of my fellow-citizens of this commonwealth, they will all of them with justice allow me to say, that none can be dearer to me than the affectionate assurances which you have expressed. Dear, indeed, is the occasion which restores an intercourse with my faithful associates in prosperous and adverse fortune; and enhanced are the triumphs of peace, participated with those whose virtue and valor so largely contributed to procure them. To that virtue and valor your country has confessed her obligations. Be mine the grateful task to add the testimony of a connection which it was my pride to own in the field, and is now my happiness to acknowledge in the enjoyments of peace and freedom.

"Regulating your conduct by those principles which have heretofore governed your actions as men, soldiers, and citizens, you will repeat the obligations conferred on your country, and you will transmit to posterity an example that must command their admiration and grateful praise. Long may you continue to enjoy the endearments of fraternal attachments and the heartfelt happiness of reflecting that you have faithfully done your duty.

"While I am permitted to possess the consciousness of this worth, which has long bound me to you by every tie of affection and esteem, I will continue to be your sincere and faithful friend."

After Washington's return to New York from his tour to the north and east, Mrs. Washington expressed, in the following letter, the gratification and benefit he had de-

rived from his journey. It also presents a delightful view of her feelings and character:

“ NEW YORK, *December 26th*, 1789.

“ MY DEAR MADAM:—Your very friendly letter, of the 27th of last month, has afforded me much more satisfaction than all the formal compliments and empty ceremonies of mere etiquette could possibly have done. I am not apt to forget the feelings that have been inspired by my former society with good acquaintances, nor to be insensible to their expressions of gratitude to the President of the United States; for you know me well enough to do me the justice to believe that I am only fond of what comes from the heart. Under a conviction that the demonstrations of respect and affection which have been made to the President originate from that source, I cannot deny that I have taken some interest and pleasure in them. The difficulties which presented themselves to view upon his first entering upon the Presidency, seem thus to be, in some measure, surmounted. It is owing to this kindness of our numerous friends, in all quarters, that my new and unwished-for situation is not indeed a burden to me. When I was much younger, I should probably have enjoyed the innocent gayeties of life as much as most of my age. But I had long since placed all the prospects of my future worldly happiness in the still enjoyments of the fireside at Mount Vernon.

“ I little thought, when the war was finished, that any circumstances could possibly have happened which would call the General into public life again. I had anticipated that, from that moment, we should have been left to grow old, in solitude and tranquillity, together. That was, my dear madam, the first and dearest wish of my heart; but in that I have been disappointed. I will not, however, con-



template with too much regret disappointments that were inevitable. Though the General's feelings and my own were perfectly in unison with respect to our predilection for private life, yet I cannot blame him for having acted according to his ideas of duty in obeying the voice of his country. The consciousness of having attempted to do all the good in his power, and the pleasure of finding his fellow-citizens so well satisfied with the disinterestedness of his conduct, will doubtless be some compensation for the great sacrifices which I know he has made. Indeed, in his journey from Mount Vernon to this place, in his late tour through the eastern States, by every public and by every private information which has come to him, I am persuaded that he has experienced nothing to make him repent his having acted from what he conceived to be, alone, a sense of indispensable duty. On the contrary, all his sensibility has been awakened in receiving such repeated and unequivocal proofs of sincere regards from all his countrymen.

“ With respect to myself, I sometimes think the arrangement is not quite as it ought to have been; that I, who had much rather be at home, should occupy a place with which a great many younger and gayer women would be prodigiously pleased. As my grandchildren and domestic connections make up a great portion of the felicity which I looked for in this world, I shall hardly be able to find any substitute that would indemnify me for the loss of a part of such endearing society. I do not say this because I feel dissatisfied with my present station. No, God forbid! For everybody and everything conspire to make me as contented as possible in it; yet I have seen too much of the vanity of human affairs to expect felicity from the splendid scenes of public life. I am still determined to be cheerful and to be happy in whatever situation I may be;

for I have also learnt from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our dispositions, and not upon our circumstances. We carry the seeds of the one or the other about with us, in our minds, wheresoever we go. I have two of my grandchildren with me, who enjoy advantages in point of education, and who, I trust, by the goodness of Providence, will continue to be a great blessing to me. My other two grandchildren are with their mother, in Virginia.

“The President’s health is quite re-established by his late journey. Mine is much better than it used to be. I am sorry to hear that General Warren has been ill; hope, before this time, that he may be entirely recovered. We should rejoice to see you both. To both, I wish the best of Heaven’s blessings; and am, my dear madam, with esteem and regard, your friend and humble servant,

“M. WASHINGTON.”

Soon after his return to New York, after his visit to the eastern States, the President was informed of the ill success which had attended his first attempt to negotiate a peace with the Creek Indians. General Lincoln, Mr. Griffin, and Colonel Humphreys had been deputed on this mission, and had met M’Gillivray with several other chiefs, and about 2,000 men, at Rock Landing, on the Oconee, on the frontiers of Georgia. The treaty commenced with favorable appearances, but was soon abruptly broken off by M’Gillivray. Some difficulties arose on the subject of a boundary, but the principal obstacles to a peace were supposed to grow out of his personal interests, and his connections with Spain.

This intelligence was more than counterbalanced by the accession of North Carolina to the Union. In the month of November a second convention had assembled under

the authority of the Legislature of that State, and the constitution was adopted by a great majority.

We embrace the occasion afforded by the interval between the two sessions of Congress to insert some further notices of Washington's mode of life in New York, as well as of his personal appearance.

The manner of living observed by President Washington has been described in the following speech, delivered by Mr. Stuyvesant, the president of the New York Historical society, at the dinner on the occasion of the jubilee celebration, in the city of New York, April 30, 1839.

"It cannot be expected, at this time and place, that any allusion should be made to the public character of Washington; we are all in possession of his history, from the dawn of life to the day that Mount Vernon was wrapped in sable; and, after the exercises of this morning, if any attempt to portray his political or military life were made, it would only be the glimmering light of a feeble star succeeding the rays of a meridian sun.

"But the occasion affords an opportunity of congratulating the small number of gentlemen present, who enjoyed the privilege of participating in the ceremonies of the 30th of April, 1789; they will recall to their memories the spontaneous effusions of joy that pervaded the breasts of the people who on that occasion witnessed the organization of a constitutional government, formed by intelligent free-men, and consummated by placing at its head the man in whom their affections were concentrated as the father of their country.

"Washington's residence in this city, after his inauguration, was limited to about two years. His deportment in life was not plain, nor was it at all pompous, for no man was more devoid of ostentation than himself, his style, however, gave universal satisfaction to all classes in the

community, and, his historian has informed us, was not adopted for personal gratification, but from a devotion to his country's welfare. Possessing a desirable stature, an erect frame, and, superadded, a lofty and sublime countenance, he never appeared in public without arresting the reverence and admiration of the beholder; and the stranger who had never before seen him, was at the first impression convinced it was the President who delighted him.

“He seldom walked in the street; his public recreation was in riding. When accompanied by Mrs. Washington, he rode in a carriage drawn by six horses, with two outriders who wore rich livery, cocked hats, with cockades and powder. When he rode on horseback he was joined by one or more of the gentlemen of his family and attended by his outriders. He always attended Divine service on Sundays. His carriage on those occasions contained Mrs. Washington and himself, with one or both of their grandchildren and was drawn by two horses, with two footmen behind; it was succeeded by a post-chaise, accommodating two gentlemen of his household. On his arrival in the city the only residence that could be procured was a house in Cherry street, long known as the mansion of the Franklin family, but in a short time afterwards he removed to and occupied the house in Broadway, now Bunker's hotel.

“Washington held a levee once a week, and, from what is now recollected, they were generally well attended, but confined to men in public life and gentlemen of leisure, for at that day it would have been thought a breach of decorum to visit the President of the United States in dishabille.

“The arrival of Washington, in 1789, to assume the reins of government, was not his first entry into this city, accompanied with honor to himself and glory to this country. This was on the 24th of November, 1783, and here

again, I must observe, the number present who witnessed the ceremonies of that day, must, indeed, be very limited; on that day he made his triumphal entry, not to sway the sceptre, but to lay down his sword, not for personal aggrandizement, but to secure the happiness of his countrymen. He early in the morning left Harlem and entered the city through what is now called the Bowery; he was escorted by cavalry and infantry and a large concourse of citizens, on horseback and on foot, in plain dress. The latter must have been an interesting sight to those of mature age who were capable of comprehending their merit. In their ranks were seen men with patched elbows, odd buttons on their coats and unmatched buckles in their shoes; they were not, indeed, Falstaff's company of scarecrows, but the most respectable citizens who had been in exile, and endured privations we know not of, for seven long and tedious years.

On that occasion, and on his arrival in 1789, Washington was received, as is well known, by the elder Clinton, who was at both periods Governor of the State."

In the following extract, from a reliable source, we have a fine description of the effect produced by Washington's personal appearance and manners on the mind of a highly intelligent observer:

"The beautiful effusion which the reader will find below is the production of the chaste and classic mind of the late venerable and distinguished senator from Rhode Island, Mr. Robbins, and was occasioned by the following circumstances. During the session of 1837-8, Mr. Webster entertained a large party of friends at dinner, among them the venerable senator we have named. The evening passed off with much hilarity, enlivened with wit and sentiment, but, during the greater part of the time, Mr. Robbins maintained that grave but placid silence which was his habit.



While thus apparently abstracted, someone suddenly called on him for a toast, which call was seconded by the company. He rose, and in his surprise asked if they were serious in making such a demand of so old a man, and being assured that they were, he said, if they would suspend their hilarity for a few moments, he would give them a toast and preface it with a few observations. Having thus secured a breathless stillness, he went on to remark, that they were then on the verge of the 22d of February, the anniversary of the birth of the great patriot and statesman of our country, whom all delighted to remember and to honor, and he hoped he might be allowed the privilege of an aged man to recur, for a few moments, to past events connected with his character and history. He then proceeded and delivered in the most happy and impressive manner the beautiful speech which now graces our columns. The whole company were electrified by his patriotic enthusiasm, and one of the guests, before they separated, begged that he would take the trouble to put on paper what he had so happily expressed and furnish a copy for publication. Mr. Robbins obligingly complied with this request on the following day, but by some accident the manuscript got mislaid and eluded all search for it until a few days ago, when it was unexpectedly recovered, and is now presented to our readers.

“On the near approach of that calendar-day which gave birth to Washington, I feel rekindling within me some of those emotions always connected with the recollection of that hallowed name. Permit me to indulge them, on this occasion, for a moment, in a few remarks, as preliminary to a sentiment which I shall beg leave to propose.

“I consider it as one of the consolations of my age, that I am old enough and fortunate enough to have seen that wonderful man. This happiness is still common to so



many yet among the living, that less is thought of it now than will be in after-times; but it is no less a happiness to me on that account.

“‘ While a boy at school, I saw him for the first time; it was when he was passing through New England, to take command in chief of the American armies at Cambridge. Never shall I forget the impression his imposing presence then made upon my young imagination, so superior did he seem to me to all that I had seen or imagined of the human form for striking effect. I remember with what delight, in my after studies, I came to the line in Virgil that expressed all the enthusiasm of my own feelings, as inspired by that presence, and which I could not often enough repeat:

“‘ I saw him again at his interview with Rochambeau, when they met to settle the plan of combined operations between the French fleet and the American armies against the British on the Chesapeake, and then I saw the immense crowd drawn together from all the neighboring towns, to get, if possible, one look at the man who had throned himself in every heart. Not one of that immense crowd doubted the final triumph of his country in her arduous conflict, for everyone saw, or thought he saw, in Washington, her guardian angel, commissioned by Heaven to insure her that triumph. ‘ Nil desperandum ’ was the motto with everyone.

“‘ In after-life, when the judgment corrects the extravagance of early impressions, I saw him on several occasions, but saw nothing to admonish me of any extravagance in

“ Credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse Deorum.”\*

“ Nil desperandum, Teucro duce, et auspice Teucro.” †

\* I verily believe, nor is my confidence unfounded, that he is of Divine descent.

† Let us never despair, with Teucer to lead us, and under Teucer’s auspices.

my early impressions. The impression was still the same; I had the same overpowering sense of standing in the presence of some superior being.

“ ‘It is indeed remarkable, and I believe unique, in the history of men, that Washington made the same impression upon all minds, at all places, and at once. When his fame first broke upon the world, it spread at once over the whole world. By the consent of mankind, by the universal sentiment, he was placed at the head of the human species; above all envy, because above all emulation; for no one then pretended, or has pretended to be — at least who has been allowed to be — the co-rival of Washington in fame.

“ ‘When the great Frederick of Prussia sent his portrait to Washington, with this inscription upon it — “From the oldest general in Europe to the greatest general in the world,” he did but echo the sentiment of all the chivalry of Europe. Nor was the sentiment confined to Europe, nor to the bounds of civilization; for the Arab of the desert talked of Washington in his tent; his name wandered with the wandering Scythian, and was cherished by him as a household word in all his migrations. No clime was so barbarous as to be a stranger to the name, but everywhere, and by all men, that name was placed at the same point of elevation, and above compeer. As it was in the beginning, so it is now; of the future we cannot speak with certainty. Some future age, in the endless revolutions of time, may produce another Washington, but the greater probability is, that he is destined to remain forever, as he now is, the Phoenix of human kind.

“ ‘What a possession to his country is such a fame! Such a

“ *Clarum et venerabile nomen gentibus?* ”\*

\* A name, illustrious and venerable among the nations!

“ ‘ To all his countrymen it gives, and forever will give, a passport to respect wherever they go, to whatever part of the globe, for his country is in every other identified with that fame.

“ ‘ What, then, is incumbent upon us, his countrymen? Why, to be such a people as shall be worthy of such a fame — a people of whom it shall be said, “ No wonder such a people have produced such a man as Washington.” I give you, therefore, this sentiment:

“ ‘ The memory of Washington: May his countrymen prove themselves a people worthy of his fame.’ ”

## CHAPTER III.

### THE PUBLIC CREDIT ESTABLISHED.

1789-1790.

**D**URING the recess of Congress Washington generally visited Mount Vernon, but, after the rising of the first Congress under the constitution, his visit to New England consumed so much time that he remained in New York till Congress reassembled. His eastern tour commenced on the 15th of October, as we have already seen, and ended on the 13th of November. As Congress was to meet on the 1st of January, 1790, he had no time to visit Mount Vernon. During the short time which elapsed before that day he was very earnestly engaged in the duties of his office and in correspondence with public men on political affairs. One of his letters, addressed to the Emperor of Morocco, is curious, as showing the tact with which he accommodated his style to the comprehension of the oriental sovereign. It was written in consequence of an intimation from Mr. Chiappe, the American agent at Mogadore, that the emperor was not well pleased at receiving no acknowledgment from the government in respect to the treaty with Morocco of the 28th of June, 1786, his subsequent faithful observance of the same, as well as his good offices in favor of the Americans with the bashaws of Tunis and Tripoli. The letter is as follows:

“GREAT AND MAGNANIMOUS FRIEND:

“Since the date of the last letter which the late Congress by their President addressed to your Imperial Ma-

(1657)

jesty, the United States of America have thought proper to change their government and to institute a new one, agreeably to the constitution, of which I have the honor of herewith inclosing a copy. The time necessarily employed in the arduous task and the derangements occasioned by so great, though peaceable, a revolution, will apologize and account for your Majesty's not having received those regular advices and marks of attention from the United States, which the friendship and magnanimity of your conduct toward them afforded reason to expect.

"The United States having unanimously appointed me to the supreme executive authority in this nation, your Majesty's letter of the 17th of August, 1788, which, by reason of the dissolution of the late government, remained unanswered, has been delivered to me. I have also received the letters which your Imperial Majesty has been so kind as to write, in favor of the United States, to the bashaws of Tunis and Tripoli, and I present to you the sincere acknowledgments and thanks of the United States for this important mark of your friendship for them.

"We greatly regret that the hostile disposition of those regencies toward this nation, who have never injured them, is not to be removed on terms in our power to comply with. Within our territories there are no mines either of gold or silver, and this young nation, just recovering from the waste and desolation of a long war, has not as yet had time to acquire riches by agriculture and commerce. But our soil is bountiful and our people industrious, and we have reason to flatter ourselves that we shall gradually become useful to our friends.

"The encouragement which your Majesty has been pleased generously to give to our commerce with your dominions, the punctuality with which you have caused

the treaty with us to be observed, and the just and generous measures taken in the case of Captain Proctor, make a deep impression on the United States, and confirm their respect for, and attachment to, your Imperial Majesty.

“It gives me pleasure to have this opportunity of assuring your Majesty that, while I remain at the head of this nation, I shall not cease to promote every measure that may conduce to the friendship and harmony which so happily subsist between your empire and them, and shall esteem myself happy on every occasion of convincing your Majesty of the high sense which, in common with the whole nation, I entertain of the magnanimity, wisdom, and benevolence of your Majesty. In the course of the approaching winter the national Legislature, which is called by the former name of Congress, will assemble, and I shall take care that nothing be omitted that may be necessary to cause the correspondence between our countries to be maintained and conducted in a manner agreeable to your Majesty and satisfactory to all parties concerned in it.

“May the Almighty bless your Imperial Majesty — our great and magnanimous friend — with his constant guidance and protection.

“Written at the city of New York, the 1st day of December, 1789.”

In December, 1789, Washington was requested by Mr. Joseph Willard, the president of Harvard University, to sit to Mr. Savage for his portrait, to be placed in the philosophy chamber of the university. Washington promptly replied to the letter of the president, and the portrait was painted by Mr. Savage, and deposited in the university.

On the 8th of January, 1790, the President met both houses of Congress in the Senate chamber.



In his speech, which was delivered from the chair of the Vice-President, after congratulating Congress on the accession of the important State of North Carolina to the Union and on the prosperous aspect of American affairs, he proceeded to recommend certain great objects of legislation to their more especial consideration.

"Among the many interesting objects," continued the speech, "which will engage your attention, that of providing for the common defense will merit your particular regard. To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.

"A free people ought not only to be armed but disciplined, to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite, and their safety and interest require that they should promote such manufactories as tend to render them independent on others for essential, particularly for military, supplies."

As connected with this subject a proper establishment for the troops which they might deem indispensable, was suggested for their mature deliberation, and the indications of a hostile temper given by several tribes of Indians, were considered as admonishing them of the necessity of being prepared to afford protection to the frontiers and to punish aggression.

The interests of the United States were declared to require that the means of keeping up their intercourse with foreign nations should be provided, and the expediency of establishing a uniform rule of naturalization was suggested.

After expressing his confidence in their attention to many improvements essential to the prosperity of the interior, the President added: "Nor am I less persuaded that you will agree with me in opinion that there is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every

country the surest basis of public happiness. In one, in which the measures of government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the community as in ours, it is proportionably essential. To the security of a free constitution it contributes in various ways, by convincing those who are intrusted with the public administration that every valuable end of government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the people, and by teaching the people themselves to know and to value their own rights; to discern and provide against invasions of them; to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority—between burdens proceeding from a disregard to their convenience, and those resulting from the inevitable exigencies of society; to discriminate the spirit of liberty from that of licentiousness, cherishing the first, avoiding the last, and uniting a speedy but temperate vigilance against encroachments, with an inviolable respect to the laws.

“Whether this desirable object will be best promoted by affording aids to seminaries of learning already established by the institution of a national university or by any other expedients, will be well worthy of a place in the deliberations of the Legislature.”

Addressing himself then particularly to the representatives, he said: “I saw with peculiar pleasure, at the close of the last session, the resolution entered into by you, expressive of your opinion that an adequate provision for the support of the public credit is a matter of high importance to the national honor and prosperity. In this sentiment I entirely concur, and to a perfect confidence in your best endeavors to devise such a provision as will be truly consistent with the end, I add an equal reliance on the cheerful co-operation of the other branch of the Legislature. It would be superfluous to specify inducements to

a measure in which the character and permanent interests of the United States are so obviously and so deeply concerned, and which has received so explicit a sanction from your declaration."

Addressing himself again to both houses he observed that the estimates and papers respecting the objects particularly recommended to their attention would be laid before them, and concluded with saying: "The welfare of our country is the great object to which our cares and efforts ought to be directed, and I shall derive great satisfaction from a co-operation with you in the pleasing though arduous task of insuring to our fellow-citizens the blessings which they have a right to expect from a free, efficient, and equal government."

The answers of both houses were indicative of the harmony which subsisted between the executive and legislative departments.

Congress had been so occupied during its first session with those bills which were necessary to bring the new system into full operation and to create an immediate revenue, that some measures which possessed great and pressing claims to immediate attention had been unavoidably deferred. The neglect under which the creditors of the public had been permitted to languish could not fail to cast an imputation on the American republic, and had been sincerely lamented by the wisest among those who administered the former government. The power to comply substantially with the engagements of the United States being at length conferred on those who were bound by them, it was confidently expected by the friends of the constitution that their country would retrieve its reputation, and that its fame would no longer be tarnished with the blots which stain a faithless people.

On the 9th of January (1790), a letter from Mr. Hamilton,

the Secretary of the Treasury, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, was read, stating that, in obedience to the resolution of the 21st of September (1789), he had prepared a plan for the support of public credit, which he was ready to report when the House should be pleased to receive it, and, after a short debate in which the personal attendance of the secretary, for the purpose of making explanations, was urged by some and opposed by others, it was resolved that the report should be received in writing on the succeeding Thursday.

Availing himself of the latitude afforded by the terms of the resolution under which he acted, the secretary had introduced into his report an able and comprehensive argument elucidating and supporting the principles it contained. After displaying, with strength and perspicuity, the justice and the policy of an adequate provision for the public debt, he proceeded to discuss the principles on which it should be made.

"It was agreed," he said, "by all, that the foreign debt should be provided for according to the precise terms of the contract. It was to be regretted that, with respect to the domestic debt, the same unanimity of sentiment did not prevail."

The first point on which the public appeared to be divided, involved the question, "whether a discrimination ought not to be made between original holders of the public securities and present possessors by purchase." After reviewing the arguments generally urged in its support, the secretary declared himself against this discrimination. He deemed it "equally unjust and impolitic, highly injurious even to the original holders of public securities, and ruinous to public credit." To the arguments with which he enforced these opinions, he added the authority of the government of the Union. From the circular ad-

dress of Congress to the States of the 26th of April, 1783, accompanying their revenue system of the 18th of the same month, passages were selected indicating, unequivocally, that in the view of that body the original creditors, and those who had become so by assignment, had equal claims upon the nation.

After reasoning at great length against a discrimination between the different creditors of the Union, the secretary proceeded to examine whether a difference ought to be permitted to remain between them and the creditors of individual States.

Both descriptions of debt were contracted for the same objects and were in the main the same. Indeed, a great part of the particular debts of the States had arisen from assumptions by them on account of the Union, and it was most equitable that there should be the same measure of retribution for all. There were many reasons, some of which were stated, for believing this would not be the case, unless the State debts should be assumed by the nation.

In addition to the injustice of favoring one class of creditors more than another which was equally meritorious, many arguments were urged in support of the policy of distributing to all with an equal hand from the same source.

After an elaborate discussion of these and some other points connected with the subject, the secretary proposed that a loan should be opened to the full amount of the debt, as well of the particular States as of the Union.

The terms to be offered were —

First. That for every \$100 subscribed payable in the debt, as well interest as principal, the subscriber should be entitled to have two-thirds funded on a yearly interest of six per cent. (the capital redeemable at the pleasure of government by the payment of the principal), and to re-



ceive the other third in lands of the western territory at their then actual value. Or,

Secondly. To have the whole sum funded at a yearly interest of four per cent., irredeemable by any payment exceeding five dollars per annum both on account of principal and interest, and to receive as a compensation for the reduction of interest, fifteen dollars and eighty cents, payable in lands as in the preceding case. Or,

Thirdly. To have sixty-six and two-thirds of a dollar funded at a yearly interest of six per cent., irredeemable also by any payment exceeding four dollars and two-thirds of a dollar per annum on account both of principal and interest, and to have at the end of ten years twenty-six dollars and eighty-eight cents funded at the like interest and rate of redemption.

In addition to these propositions, the creditors were to have an option of vesting their money in annuities on different plans, and it was also recommended to open a loan at five per cent. for ten millions of dollars, payable one-half in specie and the other half in the debt, irredeemable by any payment exceeding six dollars per annum both of principal and interest.

By way of experiment, a tontine, on principles stated in the report, was also suggested.

The secretary was restrained from proposing to fund the whole debt immediately at the current rate of interest, by the opinion, "that although such a provision might not exceed the abilities of the country, it would require the extension of taxation to a degree and to objects which the true interests of the creditors themselves would forbid. It was therefore to be hoped and expected that they would cheerfully concur in such modifications of their claims, on fair and equitable principles as would facilitate to the government an arrangement substantial, durable, and sat-



isfactory to the community. Exigencies might ere long arise which would call for resources greatly beyond what was now deemed sufficient for the current service, and should the faculties of the country be exhausted or even strained to provide for the public debt, there could be less reliance on the sacredness of the provision.

“ But while he yielded to the force of these considerations, he did not lose sight of those fundamental principles of good faith which dictate that every practicable exertion ought to be made, scrupulously to fulfil the engagements of government; that no change in the rights of its creditors ought to be attempted without their voluntary consent, and that this consent ought to be voluntary in fact, as well as in name. Consequently, that every proposal of a change ought to be in the shape of an appeal to their reason and to their interest, not to their necessities. To this end, it was requisite that a fair equivalent should be offered for what might be asked to be given up and unquestionable security for the remainder.” This fair equivalent for the proposed reduction of interest was, he thought, offered in the relinquishment of the power to redeem the whole debt at pleasure.

That a free judgment might be exercised by the holders of public securities in accepting or rejecting the terms offered by the government, provision was made in the report for paying to nonsubscribing creditors a dividend of the surplus which should remain in the treasury after paying the interest of the proposed loans; but, as the funds immediately to be provided were calculated to produce only four per cent. on the entire debt, the dividend, for the present, was not to exceed that rate of interest.

To enable the treasury to support this increased demand upon it, an augmentation of the duties on imported wines,

spirits, tea, and coffee was proposed and a duty on home-made spirits was also recommended.

This celebrated report, which has been alike the fruitful theme of extravagant praise and bitter censure, merits the more attention, because the first regular and systematic opposition to the principles on which the affairs of the Union were administered, originated in the measures which were founded on it.

On the 28th of January (1790), says Marshall, this subject was taken up, and, after some animadversions on the speculations in the public debt to which the report, it was said, had already given birth, the business was postponed until the 8th of February, when it was again brought forward.

Several resolutions affirmative of the principles contained in the report, were moved by Mr. Fitzsimmons. To the first, which respected a provision for the foreign debt, the House agreed without a dissenting voice. The second, in favor of appropriating permanent funds for payment of the interest on the domestic debt and for the gradual redemption of the principal, gave rise to a very animated debate.\*

Mr. Jackson declared his hostility to funding systems generally. To prove their pernicious influence, he appealed to the histories of Florence, Genoa, and Great Britain, and contending that the subject ought to be deferred until North Carolina should be represented, moved that the committee should rise. This question being de-

\* On account of the great importance of this debate, we give Marshall's synopsis of the arguments used on both sides. It brought up the question of State rights as opposed to centralization for the first time; and on many other accounts is particularly interesting for the political reader, as well as for all who are curious respecting our early colonial history.

cided in the negative, Mr. Scott declared the opinion that the United States were not bound to pay the domestic creditors the sums specified in the certificates of debts in their possession. He supported this opinion by urging, not that the public had received less value than was expressed on the face of the paper which had been issued, but that those to whom it had been delivered by parting with it at two shillings and sixpence in the pound, had themselves fixed the value of their claims, and had manifested their willingness to add to their other sacrifices this deduction from their demand upon the nation. He therefore moved to amend the resolution before the committee so as to require a resettlement of the debt.

The amendment was opposed by Mr. Boudinot, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Ames, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Hartley, and Mr. Goodhue. They stated at large the terms on which the debt had been contracted, and urged the confidence which the creditors had a right to place in the government for its discharge according to settlements already made, and acknowledgments already given. The idea that the legislative body could diminish an ascertained debt was reprobated with great force, as being at the same time unjust, impolitic, and subversive of every principle on which public contracts are founded. The evidences of debt possessed by the creditors of the United States were considered as public bonds, for the redemption of which the property and the labor of the people were pledged.

After the debate had been protracted to some length, the question was taken on Mr. Scott's amendment, and it passed in the negative.

Mr. Madison then rose, and, in an eloquent speech, replete with argument, proposed an amendment to the resolution, the effect of which was to discriminate between the public creditors, so as to pay the present holder of assigna-

ble paper the highest price it had borne in the market, and give the residue to the person with whom the debt was originally contracted. Where the original creditor had never parted with his claim, he was to receive the whole sum acknowledged to be due on the face of the certificate.

This motion was supported by Mr. Jackson, Mr. White, Mr. Moore, Mr. Page, Mr. Stone, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Seney.

It was opposed with great earnestness and strength of argument by Mr. Sedgewic, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Smith, of South Carolina, Mr. Ames, Mr. Gerry, Mr. Boudinot, Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Goodhue, Mr. Hartley, Mr. Bland, Mr. Benson, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Livermore.

The argument was ably supported on both sides, was long, animated, and interesting. At length the question was put and the amendment was rejected by a great majority.

This discussion deeply engaged the public attention. The proposition was new and interesting. That the debt ought to be diminished for the public advantage, was an opinion which had frequently been advanced, and was maintained by many. But a reduction from the claims of its present holders for the benefit of those who had sold their rights, was a measure which saved nothing to the public purse, and was therefore recommended only by considerations, the operation of which can never be very extensive. Against it were arrayed all who had made purchases, and a great majority of those who conceived that sound policy and honest dealing require a literal observance of public contracts.

Although the decision of Congress against a discrimination in favor of the original creditor produced no considerable sensation, the determination on that part of the secretary's report which was the succeeding subject of

deliberation, affecting political interests and powers which are never to be approached without danger, seemed to unchain all those fierce passions which a high respect for the government, and for those who administered it, had in a great measure restrained.

The manner in which the several States entered into and conducted the war of the Revolution, is well known. Acting in some respects separately, and in others conjointly, for the attainment of a common object, their resources were exerted, sometimes under the authority of Congress, sometimes under the authority of the local government, to repel the enemy wherever he appeared. The debt incurred in support of the war was, therefore, in the first instance, contracted partly by Congress and partly by the States. When the system of requisitions was adopted, the transactions of the Union were carried on almost entirely through the agency of the States, and, when the measure of compensating the army for the depreciation of their pay became necessary, this burden, under the recommendation of Congress, was assumed by the respective States. Some had funded this debt, and paid the interest upon it. Others had made no provision for the interest; but all, by taxes, paper money, or purchase, had in some measure reduced the principal. In their exertions some degree of inequality had obtained, and they looked anxiously to a settlement of accounts, for the ascertainment of claims which each supposed itself to have upon the Union. Measures to effect this object had been taken by the former government, but they were slow in their progress, and intrinsic difficulties were found in the thing itself, not easily to be overcome.

Hamilton proposed to assume these debts and to fund them in common with that which continued to be the proper debt of the Union.

The resolution which comprehended this principle of the report was vigorously opposed.

It was contended that the general government would acquire an undue influence, and that the State governments would be annihilated by the measure. Not only would all the influence of the public creditors be thrown into the scale of the former, but it would absorb all the powers of taxation, and leave to the latter only the shadow of a government. This would probably terminate in rendering the State governments useless, and would destroy the system so recently established. The Union, it was said, had been compared to a rope of sand, but gentlemen were cautioned not to push things to the opposite extreme. The attempt to strengthen it might be unsuccessful, and the cord might be strained until it should break.

The constitutional authority of the Federal government to assume the debts of the States was questioned. Its powers, it was said, were specified, and this was not among them.

The policy of the measure, as it affected merely the government of the Union, was controverted, and its justice was arraigned.

On the ground of policy, it was objected that the assumption would impose on the United States a burden, the weight of which was unascertained, and which would require an extension of taxation beyond the limits which prudence would prescribe. An attempt to raise the impost would be dangerous, and the excise added to it would not produce funds adequate to the object. A tax on real estate must be resorted to, objections to which had been made in every part of the Union. It would be more advisable to leave this source of revenue untouched in the hands of the State governments, who could apply to it with more facility, with a better understanding of the subject, and



with less dissatisfaction to individuals, than could possibly be done by the government of the United States.

There existed no necessity for taking up this burden. The State creditors had not required it. There was no petition from them upon the subject. There was not only no application from the States, but there was reason to believe that they were seriously opposed to the measure. Many of them would certainly view it with a jealous — a jaundiced eye. The convention of North Carolina which adopted the constitution had proposed, as an amendment to it, to deprive Congress of the power of interfering between the respective States and their creditors, and there could be no obligation to assume more than the balances which on a final settlement would be found due to creditor States.

That the debt by being thus accumulated would be perpetuated, was also an evil of real magnitude. Many of the States had already made considerable progress in extinguishing their debts, and the process might certainly be carried on more rapidly by them than by the Union. A public debt seemed to be considered by some as a public blessing, but to this doctrine they were not converts. If, as they believed, a public debt was a public evil, it would be enormously increased by adding those of the States to that of the Union.

The measure was unwise, too, as it would affect public credit. Such an augmentation of the debt must inevitably depreciate its value, since it was the character of paper, whatever denomination it might assume, to diminish in value in proportion to the quantity in circulation.

It would also increase an evil which was already sensibly felt. The State debts, when assumed by the continent, would, as that of the Union had already done, accumulate in large cities; and the dissatisfaction excited by the pay-

ment of taxes would be increased by perceiving that the money raised from the people flowed into the hands of a few individuals. Still greater mischief was to be apprehended. A great part of this additional debt would go into the hands of foreigners, and the United States would be heavily burdened to pay an interest which could not be expected to remain in the country.

The measure was unjust, because it was burdening those States which had taxed themselves highly to discharge the claims of their creditors with the debts of those which had not made the same exertions. It would delay the settlement of accounts between the individual States and the United States, and the supporters of the measure were openly charged with intending to defeat that settlement.

It was also said that in its execution the scheme would be found extremely embarrassing, perhaps impracticable. The case of a partial accession to the measure by the creditors, a case which would probably occur, presented a difficulty for which no provision was made, and of which no solution had been given. Should the creditors in some States come into the system, and those in others refuse to change their security, the government would be involved in perplexities from which no means of extricating itself had been shown. Nor would it be practicable to discriminate between the debts contracted for general and for local objects.

In the course of the debate severe allusions were made to the conduct of particular States, and the opinions advanced in favor of the measure were ascribed to local interests.

In support of the assumption, the debts of the States were traced to their origin. America, it was said, had engaged in a war the object of which was equally interesting to every part of the Union. It was not the war of a

particular State, but of the United States. It was not the liberty and independence of a part, but of the whole, for which they had contended, and which they had acquired. The cause was a common cause. As brethren, the American people had consented to hazard property and life in its defense. All the sums expended in the attainment of this great object, whatever might be the authority under which they were raised or appropriated, conduced to the same end. Troops were raised, and military stores purchased, before Congress assumed the command of the army or the control of the war. The ammunition which repulsed the enemy at Bunker's Hill was purchased by Massachusetts, and formed a part of the debt of that State.

Nothing could be more erroneous than the principle which had been assumed in argument, that the holders of securities issued by individual States were to be considered merely as State creditors, as if the debt had been contracted on account of the particular State. It was contracted on account of the Union, in that common cause in which all were equally interested.

From the complex nature of the political system which had been adopted in America, the war was, in a great measure, carried on through the agency of the State governments, and the debts were, in truth, the debts of the Union, for which the States had made themselves responsible. Except the civil list, the whole State expenditure was in the prosecution of the war, and the State taxes had undeniably exceeded the provision for their civil list. The foundation for the several classes of the debt was reviewed in detail, and it was affirmed to be proved from the review, and from the books in the public offices, that, in its origin, a great part of it, even in form, and the whole, in fact, was equitably due from the continent. The States individually possessing all the resources of the nation, became

responsible to certain descriptions of the public creditors. But they were the agents of the continent in contracting the debt, and its distribution among them for payment arose from the division of political power which existed under the old confederation. A new arrangement of the system had taken place, and a power over the resources of the nation was conferred on the general government. With the funds the debt also ought to be assumed. This investigation of its origin demonstrated that the assumption was not the creation of a new debt, but the reacknowledgment of liability for an old one, the payment of which had devolved on those members of the system who, at the time, were alone capable of paying it. And thence was inferred not only the justice of the measure, but a complete refutation of the arguments drawn from the constitution. If, in point of fact, the debt was in its origin continental and had been transferred to the States for greater facility of payment, there could be no constitutional objection to restoring its original and real character.

The great powers of war, of taxation, and of borrowing money, which were vested in Congress to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States, comprised that in question. There could be no more doubt of their right to charge themselves with the payment of a debt contracted in the past war, than to borrow money for the prosecution of a future war. The impolicy of leaving the public creditors to receive payment from different sources was also strongly pressed, and the jealousy which would exist between the creditors of the Union and of the States was considered as a powerful argument in favor of giving them one common interest. This jealousy, it was feared, might be carried so far as even to create an opposition to the laws of the Union.

If the State should provide for their creditors, the same

sum of money must be collected from the people as would be required if the debt should be assumed, and it would probably be collected in a manner more burdensome than if one uniform system should be established. If all should not make such provision, it would be unjust to leave the soldier of one State unpaid, while the services of the man who fought by his side were amply compensated, and, after having assumed the funds, it would dishonor the general government to permit a creditor, for services rendered or property advanced for the continent, to remain unsatisfied, because his claim had been transferred to the State at a time when the State alone possessed the means of payment. By the injured and neglected creditor such an arrangement might justly be considered as a disreputable artifice.

Instead of delaying, it was believed to be a measure which would facilitate the settlement of accounts between the States. Its advocates declared that they did not entertain and never had entertained any wish to procrastinate a settlement. On the contrary it was greatly desired by them. They had themselves brought forward propositions for that purpose, and they invited their adversaries to assist in improving the plan which had been introduced.

The settlement between the States, it was said, either would or would not be made. Should it ever take place, it would remedy any inequalities which might grow out of the assumption. Should it never take place, the justice of the measure became the more apparent. That the burdens in support of a common war, which from various causes had devolved unequally on the States, ought to be apportioned among them, was a truth too clear to be controverted, and this, if the settlement should never be accomplished, could be effected only by the measure now proposed. Indeed, in any event, it would be the only



certain, as well as only eligible plan. For how were the debtor States to be compelled to pay the balances which should be found against them?

If the measure was recommended by considerations which rendered its ultimate adoption inevitable, the present was clearly preferable to any future time. It was desirable immediately to quiet the minds of the public creditors by assuring them that justice would be done, to simplify the forms of public debt, and to put an end to that speculation which had been so much reprobated and which could be terminated only by giving the debt a real and permanent value.

That the assumption would impair the just influence of the States was controverted with great strength of argument. The diffusive representation in the State Legislatures, the intimate connection between the representative and his constituents, the influence of the State Legislatures over the members of one branch of the national Legislature, the nature of the powers exercise by the State governments, which perpetually presented them to the people in a point of view calculated to lay hold of the public affections, were guarantees that the States would retain their due weight in the political system and that a debt was not necessary to the solidity or duration of their power.

But the argument, it was said, proved too much. If a debt was now essential to the preservation of State authority it would always be so. It must therefore never be extinguished, but must be perpetuated in order to secure the existence of the State governments. If, for this purpose, it was indispensable that the expenses of the Revolutionary War should be borne by the States, it would not be less indispensable that the expenses of future wars should be borne in the same manner. Either the argument was unfounded or the constitution was wrong, and the



powers of the sword and the purse ought not to have been conferred on the government of the Union. Whatever speculative opinions might be entertained on this point, they were to administer the government according to the principles of the constitution as it was framed. But, it was added, if so much power followed the assumption as the objection implies, is it not time to ask—is it safe to forbear assuming? If the power is so dangerous it will be so when exercised by the States. If assuming tends to consolidation, is the reverse, tending to disunion, a less weighty objection? If it is answered that the non-assumption will not necessarily tend to disunion, neither, it may be replied, does the assumption necessarily tend to consolidation.

It was not admitted that the assumption would tend to perpetuate the debt. It could not be presumed that the general government would be less willing than the local governments to discharge it; nor could it be presumed that the means were less attainable by the former than the latter.

It was not contended that a public debt was a public blessing. Whether a debt was to be preferred to no debt was not the question. The debt was already contracted, and the question so far as policy might be consulted, was, whether it was more for the public advantage to give it such a form as would render it applicable to the purposes of a circulating medium, or to leave it a mere subject of speculation, incapable of being employed to any useful purpose. The debt was admitted to be an evil, but it was an evil from which, if wisely modified, some benefit might be extracted, and which, in its present state, could have only a mischievous operation.

If the debt should be placed on adequate funds, its operation on public credit could not be pernicious; in its present

precarious condition, there was much more to be apprehended in that respect.

To the objection that it would accumulate in large cities, it was answered it would be a moneyed capital, and would be held by those who chose to place money at interest, but by funding the debt the present possessors would be enabled to part with it at its nominal value, instead of selling it at its present current rate. If it should center in the hands of foreigners, the sooner it was appreciated to its proper standard, the greater quantity of specie would its transfer bring into the United States.

To the injustice of charging those States which had made great exertions for the payment of their debts with the burden properly belonging to those which had not made such exertions, it was answered that every State must be considered as having exerted itself to the utmost of its resources, and that if it could not or would not make provision for creditors to whom the Union was equitably bound, the argument in favor of an assumption was the stronger.

The arguments drawn from local interests were repelled and retorted, and a great degree of irritation was excited on both sides.

After a very animated discussion of several days, the question was taken, and the resolution was carried by a small majority. Soon after this decision, while the subject was pending before the House, the delegates from North Carolina took their seats, and changed the strength of parties. By a majority of two voices, the resolution was recommitted, and, after a long and ardent debate, was negatived by the same majority.

This proposition continued to be supported with a degree of earnestness which its opponents termed pertinacious, but not a single opinion was changed. It was

brought forward in the new and less exceptionable form of assuming specific sums from each State. Under this modification of the principle, the extraordinary contributions of particular States during the war, and their exertions since the peace, might be regarded, and the objections to the measure, drawn from the uncertainty of the sum to be assumed, would be removed. But these alterations produced no change of sentiment, and the bill was sent up to the Senate with a provision for those creditors only whose certificates of debt purported to be payable by the Union.

In this state of things the measure is understood to have derived aid from another, which was of a nature strongly to interest particular parts of the Union.

From the month of June, 1783, when Congress was driven from Philadelphia by the mutiny of a part of the Pennsylvania line, the necessity of selecting some place for a permanent residence, in which the government of the Union might exercise sufficient authority to protect itself from violence and insult, had been generally acknowledged. Scarcely any subject had occupied more time, or had more agitated the members of the former Congress than this.

In December, 1784, an ordinance was passed for appointing commissioners to purchase land on the Delaware, in the neighborhood of its falls, and to erect thereon the necessary public buildings for the reception of Congress and the officers of government; but the southern interest had been sufficiently strong to arrest the execution of this ordinance by preventing an appropriation of funds, which required the assent of nine States. Under the existing government, this subject had received the early attention of Congress, and many different situations, from the Delaware to the Potomac inclusive, had been earnestly



*THE FIRST CABINET.*



supported, but a majority of both houses had not concurred in favor of any one place. With as little success, attempts had been made to change the temporary residence of Congress. Although New York was obviously too far to the east, so many conflicting interests were brought into operation whenever the subject was touched, that no motion designating a more central place could succeed. At length, a compact respecting the temporary and permanent seat of government was entered into between the friends of Philadelphia and the Potomac, stipulating that Congress should adjourn to and hold its sessions in Philadelphia for ten years, during which time buildings for the accommodation of the government should be erected at some place on the Potomac, to which the government should remove at the expiration of the term. This compact having united the representatives of Pennsylvania and Delaware with the friends of the Potomac, in favor both of the temporary and permanent residence which had been agreed on between them, a majority was produced in favor of the two situations, and a bill which was brought into the Senate in conformity with this previous arrangement, passed both houses by small majorities. This act was immediately followed by an amendment to the bill then depending before the Senate for funding the debt of the Union. The amendment was similar in principle to that which had been unsuccessfully proposed in the House of Representatives. By its provisions, \$21,500,000 of the State debts were assumed in specified proportions, and it was particularly enacted that no certificate should be received from a State creditor which could be "ascertained to have been issued for any purpose other than compensations and expenditures for services or supplies toward the prosecution of the late war and the defense of the United States, or of some part thereof, during the same."



When the question was taken in the House of Representatives on this amendment two members, representing districts on the Potomac, who, in all the previous stages of the business, had voted against the assumption, declared themselves in its favor, and thus the majority was changed.\*

Thus was a measure carried which was supported and opposed with a degree of zeal and earnestness not often manifested, and which furnished presages, not to be mistaken, that the spirit with which the opposite opinions had been maintained, would not yield, contentedly, to the decision of a bare majority. This measure has constituted one of the great grounds of accusation against the first administration of the general government, and it is fair to acknowledge that though, in its progress, it derived no aid from the President, whose opinion remained in his own bosom, it received the full approbation of his judgment.

A bill at length passed both houses, funding the debt upon principles which lessened considerably the weight of the public burdens and was entirely satisfactory to the public creditors. The proceeds of the sales of the lands lying in the western territory and, by a subsequent act of the same session, the surplus product of the revenue, after satisfying the appropriations which were charged upon it with the addition of \$2,000,000, which the President was authorized to borrow at 5 per cent., constituted a sinking fund to be applied to the reduction of the debt.

\* It has ever been understood that these members were, on principle, in favor of the assumption as modified in the amendment made by the Senate; but they withheld their assent from it when originally proposed in the House of Representatives in the opinion that the increase of the national debt added to the necessity of giving to the departments of the national government a more central residence. It is understood that a greater number would have changed had it been necessary.

The effect of this measure was great and rapid. The public paper suddenly rose and was for a short time above par. The immense wealth which individuals acquired by this unexpected appreciation could not be viewed with indifference. Those who participated in its advantages regarded the author of a system to which they were so greatly indebted, with an enthusiasm of attachment to which scarcely any limits were assigned. To many others this adventitious collection of wealth in particular hands was a subject rather of chagrin than of pleasure, and the reputation which the success of his plans gave to the Secretary of the Treasury was not contemplated with unconcern. As if the debt had been created by the existing government, not by a war which gave liberty and independence to the United States, its being funded was ascribed by many, not to a sense of justice and to a liberal and enlightened policy, but to the desire of bestowing on the government an artificial strength, by the creation of a moneyed interest which would be subservient to its will.

The effects produced by giving the debt a permanent value justified the predictions of those whose anticipations had been most favorable. The sudden increase of moneyed capital derived from it invigorated commerce and gave a new stimulus to agriculture.

About this time there was a great and visible improvement in the circumstances of the people. Although the funding system was certainly not inoperative in producing this improvement it cannot be justly ascribed to any single cause. Progressive industry had gradually repaired the losses sustained by the war, and the influence of the constitution on habits of thinking and acting, though silent, was considerable. In depriving the States of the power to impair the obligation of contracts or to make anything but gold and silver a tender in payment of debts, the convic-

tion was impressed on that portion of society which had looked to the government for relief from embarrassment that personal exertions alone could free them from difficulties, and an increased degree of industry and economy was the natural consequence of this opinion.\*

Various other matters besides those already noticed, occupied the attention of Congress during this laborious session. The question of the slave trade was brought up by a petition from the Quakers in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and other States, and the venerable Dr. Franklin, as president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, sent in a memorial, early in February, asking the serious attention of Congress to the importance and duty of extending to the negroes the blessings of freedom. The subject was discussed at great length and with much warmth on both sides, and toward the close of March it was resolved, "That Congress have no authority to interfere in the emancipation of slaves, or in the treatment of them within any of the States." Laws for the naturalization of aliens, after two years' residence, for the patenting of useful inventions, and for securing to authors the copyright of their works; and others, regulating the mercantile marine of the Union, in respect to the seamen engaged in it; and forming a groundwork for a criminal code; for the ordering of what was called "the military establishment," only 1,216 rank and file; and for arranging the means of intercourse with the Indians in respect to trade and the acquisition of their hunting-grounds, and with European governments for the larger commerce which required the superintendence of resident ministers—these were duly considered and framed. Much other business was done, such as voting for the

\* Marshall.

public service, under the heads of the civil list, pensions for revolutionary services, the military establishment, lighthouses, embassies, and outstanding debts, the moderate sum of about \$725,000.

Both houses, having returned thanks to the corporation of the city of New York, "for the elegant and convenient accommodations furnished the Congress of the United States," adjourned on the 12th of August (1790), to meet again in December, in the city of Philadelphia.

Washington's old and valued friend, Dr. Franklin, after painful and protracted sufferings, closed a life of four-score and four years on the 17th of April, 1790. He was buried in the cemetery of Christ Church, Philadelphia, and his funeral was attended by more than 20,000 of his fellow-citizens. Congress resolved to wear the customary badge of mourning for one month, "as a mark of veneration due to the memory of a citizen, whose native genius was not more an ornament to human nature than his various exertions of it have been precious to science, to freedom, and to his country." In the National Assembly of France, Mirabeau eloquently dilated in praise of the illustrious deceased, and Lafayette seconded the motion for a decree, ordering the members to wear the usual badge of mourning for three days, and there was not a land blessed with the light of civilization which did not lament his death and pour forth expressions of sorrow for the loss which not only America, but the world had sustained.

An act was passed by Congress to accept the cession of the claims of the State of North Carolina, to a certain district of western territory, and on the 20th of May, provision was made for its government, under the title of "The Territory of the United States south of the river Ohio."

On the 29th of May, 1790, Rhode Island, having become somewhat more alive to her true interests and to the ill results which must certainly follow her exclusion from the Union, adopted the constitution and cast in her lot with the sister States for the great future which was opening before them all.

A treaty of peace was concluded in August of this year with the Creek Indians which restored tranquillity to the people of Georgia. The pacific overtures made to the Indians of the Wabash and the Miamis had not been equally successful. The western frontiers were still exposed to their incursions, and there was much reason to apprehend that the people of Kentucky and of the western counties of the middle States could only be relieved from the horrors of savage warfare by an exertion of the military strength of the Union. In the opinion of the President, the emergency required the immediate employment of a force competent to the object and which should carry terror and destruction into the heart of the hostile settlements. The people of the West, however, declared their opinion in favor of desultory military expeditions, and Congress indulged their wishes. The desire of the executive for a military establishment equal to the exigency was not regarded and the distresses of the frontier inhabitants therefore still continued.

The conduct of Spain in relation to the disputed boundary, and its pretensions to the navigation of the Mississippi, was such as to give ground to fear that its dispositions toward the United States were unfriendly. Between the United States and England the nonexecution of several articles of the treaty of peace still furnished matter for reciprocal crimination which there was the more difficulty in removing because there was no diplomatic intercourse maintained between them. Under the old government,

Mr. Adams' mission had been treated with neglect, and the new administration was not disposed to subject itself to a similar mark of disrespect. Mr. Gouverneur Morris was instructed, as an informal agent to the British government, to sound its views respecting amicable and permanent arrangements of the matters in dispute. But Mr. Morris remarked, "that there never was, perhaps, a moment in which this country (Britain) felt herself greater, and, consequently, it is the most unfavorable moment to obtain advantageous terms from her in any bargain." He conducted his mission with ability and address, but was unable to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. The communications laid before the American government at the same time by Major Beckwith, an English gentleman, who had come in an informal manner to learn the dispositions of the American government towards England and Spain, between which a rupture was expected, gave Washington an insight of the object of the delays which had been practised with Mr. Morris. He was persuaded that a disposition existed in the cabinet of London to retain things in their actual situation until the intentions of the American government should be ascertained with respect to the war supposed to be approaching. If America would make a common cause with Great Britain against Spain, the way would be smoothed to the attainment of all their objects, but if America should incline toward Spain, no adjustment of the points of difference between the two nations would be made. He therefore determined to hold himself free to pursue without reproach, in the expected war, such a course as the interest and honor of the United States might dictate. The want of official authenticity in the communications of Mr. Beckwith was, therefore, signified to that gentleman as a reason for reserve on the part of the government and the powers given to Mr. Mor-



ris were withdrawn. It was determined that things should remain in their actual situation until a change of circumstances should require a change of conduct. Scarcely had this resolution been adopted when the dispute between Britain and Spain was adjusted, and thus both the fear of inconveniences, and the hope of advantages which might result to America from war between the two powers, were terminated.

By his incessant application to public business and the consequent change of active for sedentary habits, the constitution of the President seemed much impaired and during the second session of Congress he had, for the second time since entering upon the duties of his office, been attacked by a severe disease, which reduced him to the brink of the grave. Exercise, and a temporary relief from the cares of office, being essential to the restoration of his health, he determined for the short interval afforded by the recess of the Legislature to retire from the fatigues of public life to the tranquil shades of Mount Vernon. Previously, however, he made a visit to Rhode Island, which, not having been a member of the Union at the time of his late tour through New England, had not been visited by him at that time.

His final departure from New York was not less affecting than his arrival had been, when he came to assume the reins of government. "It was always his habit," says Custis in his "Recollections," "to endeavor to avoid the manifestations of affection and gratitude that met him everywhere. He strove in vain—he was closely watched and the people would have their way. He wished to slip off unobserved from New York and thus steal a march upon his old companions in arms. But there were too many of the dear glorious old veterans of the Revolution

at that time of day in and near New York to render such an escape possible.

“The baggage had all been packed up; the horses, carriages, and servants ordered to be over the ferry to Paulus Hook by daybreak and nothing was wanting for departure but the dawn. The lights were yet burning, when the President came into the room where his family were assembled, evidently much pleased in the belief that all was right, when, immediately under the windows, the band of the artillery struck up Washington’s March. ‘There,’ he exclaimed, ‘it’s all over, we are found out. Well, well, they must have their own way.’ New York soon after appeared as if taken by storm—troops and persons of all descriptions hurrying down Broadway toward the place of embarkation, all anxious to take a last look on him whom so many could never expect to see again.

“The embarkation was delayed until all the complimentary arrangements were completed. The President, after taking leave of many dear and cherished friends, and many an old companion in arms, stepped into the barge that was to convey him from New York forever. The coxswain gave the word ‘let fall;’ the spray from the oars sparkled in the morning sunbeams; the bowman shoved off from the pier, and, as the barge swung round to the tide, Washington rose, uncovered, in the stern, to bid adieu to the masses assembled on the shore; he waved his hat, and, in a voice tremulous from emotion, pronounced—Farewell. It may be supposed that Major Bauman, who commanded the artillery on this interesting occasion, who was first captain of Lamb’s regiment, and a favorite officer of the war of the Revolution, would, when about to pay his last respects to his beloved commander, load his pieces with something more than mere blank cartridges. But ah! the thunders of the cannon were completely hushed when the

mighty shout of the people arose that responded to the farewell of Washington. Pure from the heart it came, right up to Heaven it went, to call down a blessing upon the Father of his Country.

“The barge had scarcely gained the middle of the Hudson when the trumpets were heard at Paulus Hook, where the Governor and the chivalry of Jersey were in waiting to welcome the chief to those well-remembered shores. Escorts of cavalry relieved each other throughout the whole route up to the Pennsylvania line; every village, and even hamlet, turned out its population to greet with cordial welcome the man upon whom all eyes were fixed and in whom all hearts rejoiced.

“What must have been the recollections that crowded on the mind of Washington during this triumphant progress? Newark, Brunswick, Princeton, Trenton! What a contrast between the glorious burst of sunshine that now illumined and made glad everything around these memorable spots, with the gloomy and desolate remembrances of '76! Then his country's champion, with the wreck of a shattered host, was flying before a victorious and well-appointed foe, while all around him was shrouded in the darkness of despair; now, in his glorious progress over the self-same route, his firm footstep presses upon the soil of an infant empire, reposing in the joys of peace, independence, and happiness.

“Among the many who swelled his triumph, the most endeared to the heart of the chief were the old associates of his toils, his fortunes, and his fame. Many of the Revolutionary veterans were living in 1790, and, by their presence, gave a dignified tone and character to all public assemblages; and when you saw a peculiarly fine-looking soldier in those old days, and would ask: ‘To what corps of the American army did you belong?’ drawing himself

up to his full height, with a martial air, and back of the hand thrown up to his forehead, the veteran would reply: 'Life Guard, your honor.'

"And proud and happy were these veterans in again beholding their own good Lady Washington. Greatly was she beloved in the army. Her many intercessions with the chief for the pardon of offenders — her kindness to the sick and wounded — all caused her annual arrival in camp to be hailed as an event that would serve to dissipate the gloom of the winter quarters.

"Arrived at the line, the Jersey escort was relieved by the cavalry of Pennsylvania, and, when near to Philadelphia, the President was met by Governor Mifflin and a brilliant cortege of officers, and escorted by a squadron of horse to the city. Conspicuous among the Governor's suite, as well for his martial bearing as for the manly beauty of his person, was General Walter Stewart, a son of Erin, and a gallant and distinguished officer of the Pennsylvania line. To Stewart, as to Cadwallader, Washington was most warmly attached; indeed, those officers were among the very choicest of the contributions of Pennsylvania to the army and cause of independence. Mifflin, small in stature, was active, alert, 'every inch a soldier.' He was a patriot of great influence in Pennsylvania in the 'times that tried men's souls,' and nobly did he exert that influence in raising troops, with which to reinforce the wreck of the grand army at the close of the campaign of '76.

"Arrived within the city, the crowd became intense, the President left his carriage and mounted the white charger, and, with the Governor on his right, proceeded to the city tavern in Third street, where quarters were prepared for him, the light infantry, after some time, having opened a passage for the carriages. At the city tavern the Presi-

dent was received by the authorities of Philadelphia, who welcomed the chief magistrate to their city as to his home for the remainder of his Presidential term. A group of old and long-trying friends were also in waiting. Foremost among these, and first to grasp the hand of Washington, was one who was always nearest to his heart, a patriot and public benefactor, Robert Morris.

"After remaining a short time in Philadelphia, the President speeded on his journey to that home where he ever found rest from his weighty labors, and enjoyed the sweets of rural and domestic happiness amid his farms and at his fireside of Mount Vernon."

Whenever Washington was residing at Mount Vernon, he was accustomed to receive visits from his old and intimate friends, and to relieve his mind from the cares of state by lively and familiar conversation, and social and convivial intercourse. On one occasion, some years before the period of which we are now writing,\* Mr. Drayton and Mr. Izard, of South Carolina, were on a visit to Mount Vernon. After dinner, while the party were still sitting at table, the conversation turned on Arnold's treason. Mr. Lear, Washington's private secretary, was present, and after retiring he wrote down in his diary Washington's own account of that remarkable incident in our history in his own words. The extract from Mr. Lear's diary has recently been published for the first time in Mr. Rush's "Washington in Domestic Life." It is as follows:

"After dinner, Washington was, in the course of conversation, led to speak of Arnold's treachery, when he gave the following account of it, which I shall put in his own

\* October 23, 1786, was the date of Messrs. Drayton and Izard's visit.

words, thus: 'I confess I had a good opinion of Arnold before his treachery was brought to light; had that not been the case I should have had some reason to suspect him sooner, for when he commanded in Philadelphia, the Marquis Lafayette brought accounts from France of the armament which was to be sent to co-operate with us in the ensuing campaign. Soon after this was known, Arnold pretended to have some private business to transact in Connecticut, and on his way there he called at my quarters, and in the course of conversation expressed a desire of quitting Philadelphia and joining the army the ensuing campaign. I told him that it was probable we should have a very active one, and that if his wound and state of health would permit, I should be extremely glad of his services with the army. He replied that he did not think his wound would permit him to take a very active part, but still he persisted in his desire of being with the army. He went on to Connecticut and on his return called again upon me. He renewed his request of being with me next campaign, and I made him the same answer I had done before. He again repeated that he did not think his wound would permit him to do active duty, and intimated a desire to have the command at West Point. I told him I did not think that would suit him, as I should leave none in the garrison but invalids, because it would be entirely covered by the main army. The subject was dropped at that time, and he returned to Philadelphia. It then appeared somewhat strange to me that a man of Arnold's known activity and enterprise should be desirous of taking so inactive a part. I however thought no more of the matter. When the French troops arrived at Rhode Island, I had intelligence from New York that General Clinton intended to make an attack upon them before they could get themselves settled and fortified. In consequence of



that I was determined to attack New York, which would be left much exposed by his drawing off the British troops, and accordingly formed my line of battle and moved down with the whole army to King's ferry, which we passed. Arnold came to camp that time, and, having no command, and consequently no quarters (all the houses thereabouts being occupied by the army), he was obliged to seek lodgings at some distance from the camp. While the army was crossing at King's ferry I was going to see the last detachment over, and met Arnold, who asked me if I had thought of anything for him. I told him that he was to have the command of the light troops, which was a post of honor, and which his rank indeed entitled him to. Upon this information his countenance changed, and he appeared to be quite fallen; and, instead of thanking me, or expressing any pleasure at the appointment, never opened his mouth. I desired him to go on to my quarters and get something to refresh himself, and I would meet him there soon. He did so. Upon his arrival there he found Colonel Tilghman, whom he took aside, and, mentioning what I had told him, seemed to express great uneasiness at it — as his leg, he said, would not permit him to be long on horseback, and intimated a great desire to have the command at West Point. When I returned to my quarters Colonel Tilghman informed me of what had passed. I made no reply to it, but his behavior struck me as strange and unaccountable. In the course of that night, however, I received information from New York that General Clinton had altered his plan and was debarking his troops. This information obliged me likewise to alter my disposition and return to my former station, where I could better cover the country. I then determined to comply with Arnold's desire, and accordingly gave him the command of the garrison at West Point. Things remained in this

situation about a fortnight, when I wrote to the Count Rochambeau, desiring to meet him at some intermediate place (as we could neither of us be long enough from our respective commands to visit the other), in order to lay the plan for the siege of Yorktown, and proposed Hartford, where I accordingly went and met the count. On my return I met the Chevalier Luzerne toward evening within about fifteen miles of West Point (on his way to join the count at Rhode Island), which I intended to reach that night, but he insisted upon turning back with me to the next public house, where, in politeness to him, I could not but stay all night, determining, however, to get to West Point to breakfast very early. I sent off my baggage, and desired Colonel Hamilton to go forward and inform General Arnold that I would breakfast with him. Soon after he arrived at Arnold's quarters a letter was delivered to Arnold which threw him into the greatest confusion. He told Colonel Hamilton that something required his immediate attendance at the garrison, which was on the opposite side of the river to his quarters, and immediately ordered a horse to take him to the river, and the barge, which he kept to cross, to be ready, and desired Major Franks, his aide, to inform me when I should arrive that he was gone over the river and would return immediately. When I got to his quarters and did not find him there I desired Major Franks to order me some breakfast, and, as I intended to visit the fortifications, I would see General Arnold there. After I had breakfasted I went over the river, and, inquiring for Arnold, the commanding officer told me that he had not been there. I likewise inquired at the several redoubts, but no one could give me any information where he was. The impropriety of his conduct, when he knew I was to be there, struck me very forcibly, and my mind misgave me, but I had not the least

idea of the real cause. When I returned to Arnold's quarters about two hours after, and told Colonel Hamilton that I had not seen him, he gave me a packet which had just arrived for me from Colonel Jemmison, which immediately brought the matter to light. I ordered Colonel Hamilton to mount his horse and proceed with the greatest dispatch to a post on the river about eight miles below, in order to stop the barge if she had not passed, but it was too late. It seems that the letter which Arnold received which threw him into such confusion was from Colonel Jemmison, informing him that André was taken, and that the papers found upon him were in his possession. Colonel Jemmison, when André was taken with these papers, could not believe that Arnold was a traitor, but rather thought it was an imposition of the British in order to destroy our confidence in Arnold. He, however, immediately on their being taken, dispatched an express after me, ordering him to ride night and day till he came up with me. The express went the lower road, which was the road by which I had gone to Connecticut, expecting that I would return by the same route, and that he would meet me, but before he had proceeded far he was informed that I was returning by the upper road. He then cut across the country and followed in my track till I arrived at West Point. He arrived about two hours after and brought the above packet. When Arnold got down to the barge, he ordered his men, who were very clever fellows and some of the better sort of soldiery, to proceed immediately on board the *Vulture*, sloop-of-war, as a flag, which was lying down the river, saying that they must be very expeditious, as he must return in a short time to meet me, and promised them two gallons of rum if they would exert themselves. They did, accordingly, but when they got on board the *Vulture*, instead of their two gallons of rum, he ordered

the coxswain to be called down into the cabin, and informed him that he and the men must consider themselves as prisoners. The coxswain was very much astonished, and told him that they came on board under the sanction of a flag. He answered that that was nothing to the purpose; they were prisoners. But the captain of the Vulture had more generosity than this pitiful scoundrel, and told the coxswain that he would take his parole for going on shore to get clothes, and whatever else was wanted for himself and his companions. He accordingly came, got his clothes, and returned on board. When they got to New York, General Clinton, ashamed of so low and mean an action, set them **all at liberty.**'"

This narrative, from the lips of Washington himself, throws much additional light on Arnold's treason. It is also interesting to the general reader, as affording a specimen of Washington's style in conversation, when the events of the Revolution formed the topic of discourse.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE NATIONAL BANK ESTABLISHED.

1790.

ON his way from New York to Mount Vernon Washington stopped for a short time, as we have seen, in Philadelphia. While there he addressed a letter to his private secretary, Mr. Lear, which is interesting not only for the information it contains respecting his residence, but from its illustrating that remarkable attention to the details of business, which we have already had occasion to notice.

"After a pleasant journey," he writes, "we arrived in this city on Thursday last (September 2, 1790), and tomorrow we proceed—if Mrs. Washington's health will permit, for she has been much indisposed since we came here—toward Mount Vernon. The house of Mr. Robert Morris had, previous to my arrival, been taken by the corporation for my residence.\* It is the best they could get. It is, I believe, the best single house in the city. Yet without additions it is inadequate to the commodious accommodation of my family. These additions, I believe,

\* This house was in Market street, on the south side, near Sixth street. The market-house buildings then reached only to Fourth street; the town in this street extended westward scarcely so far as Ninth street; good private dwellings were seen above Fifth street; Mr. Morris' was perhaps the best; the garden was well inclosed by a wall.—(Richard Rush, "Washington in Domestic Life," from Original Letters and Manuscripts. Philadelphia, 1857.)

will be made. The first floor contains only two public rooms (except one for the upper servants). The second floor will have two public (drawing) rooms, and with the aid of one room with a partition in it, in the back building, will be sufficient for the use of Mrs. Washington and the children, and their maids, besides affording her a small place for a private study and dressing-room. The third story will furnish you and Mrs. Lear with a good lodging-room, a public office (for there is no room below for one), and two rooms for the gentlemen of the family. The garret has four good rooms, which must serve Mr. and Mrs. Hyde\*—unless they should prefer the room over the workhouse—William, and such servants as it may not be better to place in the proposed additions to the back building. There is a room over the stable which may serve the coachman and postillions, and there is a smokehouse, which may possibly be more valuable for the use of servants than for the smoking of meats. The intention of the addition to the back building is to provide a servant's hall and one or two lodging-rooms for the servants. There are good stables, but for twelve horses only, and a coach-house, which will hold all my carriages. Speaking of carriages, I have left my coach to receive a thorough repair, by the time I return, which I expect will be before the 1st of December."

The Legislature, meantime, had appropriated for his residence an elegant house in South Ninth street, which was taken down a few years since, having been occupied by the University, and other buildings were erected on the same lot for the same purpose. But Washington refused to occupy the house offered by the State authorities, because he would not live in a house which was not hired and paid for by himself. He was desirous, however, to have the

\* Mr. Hyde was butler.



rent fixed before he entered the house, and he wrote repeatedly to Mr. Lear from Mount Vernon to ascertain what the rent would be. On the 14th of November, 1790, he wrote to Mr. Lear as follows:

“I am, I must confess, exceedingly unwilling to go into any house without first knowing on what terms I do it, and wish that this sentiment could be again hinted in delicate terms to the parties concerned with me. I cannot, if there are no latent motives which govern in this case, see any difficulty in the business. Mr. Morris has most assuredly formed an idea of what ought in equity to be the rent of the tenement in the condition he left it, and with this aid the committee ought, I conceive, to be as little at a loss in determining what it should rent for, with the additions and alterations which are about to be made, and which ought to be done in a plain and neat, not by any means in an extravagant style, because the latter is not only contrary to my wish but would really be detrimental to my interest and convenience, principally because it would be the means of keeping me out of the use and comforts of the house to a late period, and because the furniture and everything else would require to be accordant therewith, besides making me pay an extravagant price, perhaps to accommodate the alterations to the taste of another or to the exorbitant rates of workmen.

“I do not know, nor do I believe, that anything unfair is intended by either Mr. Morris or the committee, but let us for a moment suppose that the rooms (the new ones I mean) were to be hung with tapestry or a very rich and costly paper, neither of which would suit my present furniture; that costly ornaments for the bow windows, extravagant chimney-pieces, and the like were to be provided; that workmen, from extravagance of the times for every twenty shillings’ worth of work would charge forty

shillings, and that advantage should be taken of the occasion to new paint every part of the house and buildings, would there be any propriety in adding ten or twelve and a half per cent. for all this to the rent of the house in its original state for the two years that I am to hold it? If the solution of these questions is in the negative, wherein lies the difficulty of determining that the houses and lots, when finished according to the proposed plan, ought to rent for so much? When all is done that can be done, the residence will not be so commodious as the house I left in New York, for there (and the want of it will be found a real inconvenience at Mr. Morris') my office was in a front room below, where persons on business were at once admitted, whereas now they will have to ascend two pair of stairs and to pass by the public rooms to go to it. Notwithstanding which I am willing to allow as much as was paid to Mr. Macomb, and shall say nothing if more is demanded, unless there is apparent extortion or the policy of delay is to see to what height rents will rise before mine is fixed. In either of these cases I should not be pleased, and to occupy the premises at the expense of any public body I will not.

"I had rather have heard that my repaired coach was plain and elegant than rich and elegant."

The rent of Mr. Morris' house was finally settled at \$3,000 a year, and at this rate it was occupied by Washington till the expiration of his second term as President and his final retirement to Mount Vernon.

Our readers will excuse us for dwelling a little longer on the domestic arrangements of Washington, as disclosed in his letters to Mr. Lear. These details are not only curious and entertaining, as showing the style of living half a century ago, but as exhibiting the modest and economical style in which Washington chose to live; and they

refute the calumnies of his political enemies, who, a little later, charged him with anti-republican state and splendor in his style of living. One of his letters to Mr. Lear relates to the servants. "The pressure of business," he writes, "under which I labored for several days before I left New York, allowed me no time to inquire who of the female servants it was proposed or thought advisable to remove here, besides the wives of the footmen, James and Fidas. With respect to Mr. Hyde and his wife, if it is not stated on some paper handed in by Mr. Hyde, it is nevertheless strong on my recollection that his wife's services were put down at \$100 and his own at \$200 per annum. I have no wish to part with Mr. or Mrs. Hyde; first, because I do not like to be changing, and, second, because I do not know where or with whom to supply their places. On the score of accounts I can say nothing, having never taken a comparative view of his and Fraunces', but I am exceedingly mistaken if the expenses of the second table, at which Mr. Hyde presides, have not greatly exceeded those of the tables kept by Fraunces, for I strongly suspect (but in this I may be mistaken) that nothing is brought to my table of liquors, fruits, or other luxuries that is not used as profusely at his. If my suspicions are unfounded I shall be sorry to have entertained them, and if they are not, it is at least questionable whether under his successor the same things might not be done; in which case (if Hyde is honest and careful, of which you are better able to judge than I am), a change without benefit might take place, which is not desirable if they are to be retained on proper terms. I say they, for if Mrs. Hyde is necessary for the purposes enumerated in your letter, and the cook is not competent to prepare the dessert, make cake, etc., I do not see of what use Hyde will be, more than William, without her. Fraunces, besides being an excellent cook, knowing how to provide genteel

dinners, and giving aid in dressing them, prepared the dessert, made the cake, and did everything that is done by Hyde and his wife together; consequently the services of Hyde alone are not to be compared with those of Fraunces; and if his accounts exceed those of Fraunces, in the same seasons — £4 or £5 a week — and at the same time appear fair, I shall have no scruple to acknowledge that I have entertained much harder thoughts of him than I ought to have done, although it is unaccountable to me how other families, on \$2,500 or \$3,000 a year, should be enabled to entertain more company or at least entertain more frequently than I could do for \$25,000."

Respecting the furniture, Washington writes: "Mr. and Mrs. Morris have insisted upon leaving the two large looking-glasses which are in their best rooms, because they have no place, they say, proper to remove them to, and because they are unwilling to hazard the taking of them down. You will, therefore, let them have, instead, the choice of mine; the large ones I purchased of the French minister they do not incline to take, but will be glad of some of the others. They will also leave a large glass lamp in the entry or hall, and will take one or more of my glass lamps in lieu of it. \* \* \* Mrs. Morris has a mangle (I think it is called) for ironing clothes, which, as it is fixed in the place where it is commonly used, she proposes to leave and take mine. To this I have no objection, provided mine is equally good and convenient; but if I should obtain any advantages, besides that of its being up and ready for use, I am not inclined to receive it.

"I have no particular direction to give respecting the appropriation of the furniture. By means of the bow-windows the back rooms will become the largest, and, of course, will receive the furniture of the largest dining and drawing-rooms; and in that case, though there are no closets in them, there are some in the steward's room,

directly opposite, which are not inconvenient. There is a small room adjoining the kitchen that might, if it is not essential for other purposes, be appropriated for the Sevres china and other things of that sort, which are not in common use.

“Mrs. Morris, who is a notable lady in family arrangements, can give you much information on all the conveniences about the house and buildings, and I dare say would rather consider it as a compliment to be consulted in these matters, as she is so near, than a trouble to give her opinion of them.

“I approve, at least till inconvenience or danger shall appear, of the large table ornaments remaining on the sideboard, and of the pagodas standing in the smallest drawing-room. Had I delivered my sentiment from here, respecting this fixture, that is the apartment I should have named for it. Whether the green, which you have, or a new yellow curtain, should be appropriated to the staircase above the hall may depend on your getting an exact match in color and so forth of the latter. For the sake of appearances one would not, in instances of this kind, regard a small additional expense.”

In these letters, written to Mr. Lear during Washington's residence at Mount Vernon, in the autumn of 1790, he frequently refers to the children under Mrs. Washington's care, who composed a part of the family. In a letter, dated October 3d, he requests Mr. Lear to make inquiries respecting the schools in Philadelphia, with a view to placing Washington Custis, Mrs. Washington's grandson, at the best. If the college is under good regulations, he inquires if it would not be better to put him there at once. Again, in a letter dated October 10th, after speaking of the proper care and instruction of his niece, Miss Harriet Washington, when he should be established in



Philadelphia, he refers again to Washington Custis' education, whom he had adopted as a son, and in whom he appears to have taken great interest.\* He also wishes inquiry to be made as to the higher branches taught at the college, with a view to placing his nephews, George and Lawrence Washington, at that institution in Philadelphia. Having studied the languages, they are engaged, he adds, under Mr. Harrow, in Alexandria, in learning mathematics and French. In a letter dated November 7, 1790, Washington expresses renewed anxiety respecting the education of his adopted son, Washington Custis, who appears to have been about eight years old at this time, and discusses the question of placing him at the college, if his age will admit of it.

On the 17th of November (1790), Washington, writing from Mount Vernon to Mr. Lear at Philadelphia, mentions that he is just setting out for Alexandria to a public dinner given to him by the citizens of that place. In his letter of November 23d, he dates from a tavern on the road, about twelve miles from Baltimore. He was then on his journey from Mount Vernon to Philadelphia in his own traveling carriage with Mrs. Washington, the children, and the servants in attendance on the children, accompanying them in a stage-coach hired for their accommodation.

The party arrived in Philadelphia on Saturday, the 28th of November (1790), and immediately took possession of the house which had been hired for the accommodation of the President and his family. The members of Congress and other public functionaries were mostly at their posts, and a crowd of strangers were resorting to the city, in

\* Mr. Custis was the writer of the "Reminiscences" we have so frequently quoted. He died on the 10th of October, 1857, aged seventy-six years.



expectation of the gay and brilliant pleasures and society which are usual in the metropolis in the winter season.

In the President's family, "the rules for receiving visitors and entertaining company," says Dr. Griswold,\* "continued to be very nearly the same as in New York. Respectable citizens and strangers, properly introduced, were seen by the President every other Tuesday, between the hours of 3 and 4 in the afternoon. The receptions were in the dining-room, on the first floor, in the back part of the house. At 3 o'clock, all the chairs having been removed, the door was opened, and the President, usually surrounded by members of his cabinet, or other distinguished men, was seen by the approaching visitor standing before the fireplace, his hair powdered and gathered behind in a silk bag, coat and breeches of plain black velvet, white or pearl-colored vest, yellow gloves, a cocked hat in his hand, silver knee and shoe-buckles, and a long sword, with a finely-wrought and glittering steel hilt, the coat worn over it, and its scabbard of polished white leather. On these occasions he never shook hands, even with his most intimate friends. The name of everyone was distinctly announced, and he rarely forgot that of a person who had been once introduced to him. The visitor was received with a dignified bow and passed on to another part of the room. At a quarter past 3 the door was closed, the gentlemen present moved into a circle, and he proceeded, beginning at his right hand, to exchange a few words with each. When the circuit was completed he resumed his first position and the visitors approached him in succession, bowed, and retired.

"At the levees of Mrs. Washington he did not consider any visits made to himself, and he appeared as a private

\* Republican Court.

gentleman, with neither hat nor sword, conversing without restraint, generally with women, who rarely had other opportunities of meeting him."

Congress assembled for its third session on the 6th of December, 1790, the day which had been appointed by adjournment. But the members had not yet learned to be punctual in their attendance, and it was not till the 8th that a sufficient number took their seats to authorize their entering upon the business of the session. Among the members we recognize some celebrated names. From Massachusetts were Elbridge Gerry, afterward Vice-President of the United States, and Fisher Ames, one of the most illustrious of American orators; from Connecticut, the veteran statesman, Roger Sherman; from New Jersey, the philanthropist, Elias Boudinot; from Pennsylvania, Peter and Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg and George Clymer; from Virginia, James Madison; from North Carolina, Hugh Williamson, and from Georgia, Gen. James Jackson. This is but a portion of the strong array of historical names which adorned the First Congress of the United States under the constitution.

In his speech delivered to Congress at the commencement of their third session, Washington expressed much satisfaction at the favorable prospect of public affairs, and particularly noticed the progress of public credit and the productiveness of the revenue.

Adverting to foreign nations, he said: "The disturbed situation of Europe, and particularly the critical posture of the great maritime powers, whilst it ought to make us more thankful for the general peace and security enjoyed by the United States, reminds us at the same time of the circumspection with which it becomes us to preserve these blessings. It requires, also, that we should not overlook the tendency of a war, and even of preparations for war,

among the nations most concerned in active commerce with this country, to abridge the means and thereby, at least, to enhance the price of transporting its valuable productions to their proper market." To the serious reflection of Congress was recommended the prevention of embarrassments from these contingencies, by such encouragement to American navigation as would render the commerce and agriculture of the United States less dependent on foreign bottoms.

After expressing to the House of Representatives his confidence arising from the sufficiency of the revenues already established, for the objects to which they were appropriated, he added: "Allow me moreover to hope that it will be a favorite policy with you not merely to secure a payment of the interest of the debt funded, but, as far and as fast as the growing resources of the country will permit, to exonerate it of the principal itself." Many subjects relative to the interior government were succinctly and briefly mentioned, and the speech concluded with the following impressive and admonitory sentiment: "In pursuing the various and weighty business of the present session, I indulge the fullest persuasion that your consultations will be marked with wisdom and animated by the love of country. In whatever belongs to my duty you shall have all the co-operation which an undiminished zeal for its welfare can inspire. It will be happy for us both, and our best reward, if, by a successful administration of our respective trusts, we can make the established government more and more instrumental in promoting the good of our fellow-citizens, and more and more the object of their attachment and confidence."

The addresses of the two Houses, in answer to the speech, proved that the harmony between the executive and legislative departments, with which the government

had gone into operation, had sustained no essential interruption. But in the short debate which took place on the occasion in the House of Representatives a direct disapprobation of one of the measures of the executive government was, for the first time, openly expressed.

In the treaty lately concluded with the Creek Indians, an extensive territory claimed by Georgia, under treaties, the validity of which was contested by the chiefs, had been entirely, or in great part, relinquished. This relinquishment excited serious discontents in that State and was censured by General Jackson, with considerable warmth, as an unjustifiable abandonment of the rights and interests of Georgia. No specific motion, however, was made, and the subject was permitted to pass away for the present.

Scarcely were the debates on the address concluded when several interesting reports were received from Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, suggesting such further measures as were deemed necessary for the establishment of public credit.

It will be recollected that, in his original report on this subject, the secretary had recommended the assumption of the State debts, and had proposed to enable the treasury to meet the increased demand upon it, which this measure would occasion, by an augmentation of the duties on imported wines, spirits, tea, and coffee and by imposing duties on spirits distilled within the country. The assumption not having been adopted until late in the session, the discussion on the revenue which would be required for this portion of the public debt did not commence until the House had become impatient for an adjournment. As much contrariety of opinion was disclosed, and the subject was not of immediate importance, it was deferred to the ensuing session, and an order was made requiring the Secretary of the Treasury to prepare and report such

further provision as might, in his opinion, be necessary for establishing the public credit. In obedience to this order, several reports had been prepared, the first of which repeated the recommendation of an additional impost on foreign distilled spirits and of a duty on spirits distilled within the United States. The estimated revenue from these sources was \$877,500, affording a small excess over the sum which would be required to pay the interest on the assumed debt. The policy of the measure was discussed in a well-digested and able argument, detailing many motives, in addition to those assigned in his original report, for preferring the system now recommended to accumulated burdens on commerce or to a direct tax on lands.

A new tax is the certain rallying point for all those who are unfriendly to the administration or to the minister by whom it is proposed. But that recommended by the secretary contained intrinsic causes of objection which would necessarily add to the number of its enemies. All that powerful party in the United States which attached itself to the local rather than to the general government, would inevitably contemplate any system of internal revenue with jealous disapprobation. They considered the imposition of a tax by Congress on any domestic manufacture as the intrusion of a foreign power into their particular concerns, which excited serious apprehensions for State importance and for liberty. In the real or supposed interests of many individuals was also found a distinct motive for hostility to the measure. A large portion of the American population, especially that which had spread itself over the extensive regions of the West, consuming imported articles to a very inconsiderable amount, was not much affected by the impost on foreign merchandise. But the duty on spirits distilled within the United States reached them, and consequently rendered them hostile to the tax.



A bill which was introduced in pursuance of the report (1791) was opposed with great vehemence by a majority of the southern and western members. By some of them it was insisted that no sufficient testimony had yet been exhibited that the taxes already imposed would not be equal to the exigencies of the public. But, admitting the propriety of additional burdens on the people, it was contended that other sources of revenue less exceptionable and less odious than this might be pointed out. The duty was branded with the hateful epithet of an excise, a species of taxation, it was said, so peculiarly oppressive as to be abhorred even in England, and which was totally incompatible with the spirit of liberty. The facility with which it might be extended to other objects was urged against its admission into the American system, and declarations made against it by the Congress of 1775 were quoted in confirmation of the justice with which inherent vices were ascribed to this mode of collecting taxes. So great was the hostility manifested against it in some of the States that the revenue officers might be endangered from the fury of the people, and in all it would increase a ferment which had been already extensively manifested.

When required to produce a system in lieu of that which they objected to, the opponents of the bill alternately mentioned an increased duty on imported articles generally, a particular duty on molasses, a direct tax, a tax on salaries, pensions, and lawyers, a duty on newspapers, and a stamp act.

The friends of the bill contended that the reasons for believing the existing revenue would be insufficient to meet the engagements of the United States were as satisfactory as the nature of the case would admit or as ought to be required. The estimates were founded on the best data which were attainable, and the funds already provided



had been calculated by the proper officer to pay the interest on that part of the debt only for which they were pledged. Those estimates were referred to as documents from which it would be unsafe to depart. They were also in possession of official statements showing the productiveness of the taxes from the time the revenue bill had been in operation, and arguments were drawn from these demonstrating the danger to which the infant credit of the United States would be exposed by relying on the existing funds for the interest on the assumed debt. It was not probable that the proposed duties would yield a sum much exceeding that which would be necessary, but should they fortunately do so, the surplus revenue might be advantageously employed in extinguishing a part of the principal. They were not, they said, of opinion that a public debt was a public blessing, or that it ought to be perpetuated.

An augmentation of the revenue being indispensable to the solidity of the public credit, a more eligible system than that proposed in the bill could not, it was believed, be devised. Still further to burden commerce would be a hazardous experiment, which might afford no real supplies to the treasury. Until some lights should be derived from experience, it behooved the Legislature to be cautious not to lay such impositions upon trade as might probably introduce a spirit of smuggling, which, with a nominal increase, would occasion a real diminution of revenue. In the opinion of the best judges, the impost on the mass of foreign merchandise could not safely be carried further for the present. The extent of the mercantile capital of the United States would not justify the attempt. Forcible arguments were also drawn from the policy and the justice of multiplying the subjects of taxa-

tion and diversifying them by a union of internal with external objects.

Neither would a direct tax be advisable. The experience of the world had proved that a tax on consumption was less oppressive and more productive than a tax on either property or income. Without discussing the principles on which the fact was founded, the fact itself was incontestable that, by insensible means, much larger sums might be drawn from any class of men than could be extracted from them by open and direct taxes.

Against the substitution of a duty on internal negotiations, it was said that revenue to any considerable extent could be collected from them only by means of a stamp act, which was not less obnoxious to popular resentment than an excise, would be less certainly productive than the proposed duties, and was, in every respect, less eligible.

The honor, the justice, and the faith of the United States were pledged, it was said, to that class of creditors for whose claims the bill under consideration was intended to provide. No means of making the provision had been suggested, which, on examination, would be found equally eligible with a duty on ardent spirits. Much of the public prejudice which appeared in certain parts of the United States against the measure was to be ascribed to their hostility to the term "excise," a term which had been inaccurately applied to the duty in question. When the law should be carried into operation, it would be found not to possess those odious qualities which had excited resentment against a system of excise. In those States where the collection of a duty on spirits distilled within the country had become familiar to the people, the same prejudices did not exist. On the good sense and virtue of the nation they could confidently rely for acquiescence in a measure which the public exigencies rendered neces-

sary, which tended to equalize the public burdens and which, in its execution, would not be oppressive.

A motion made by General Jackson to strike out that section which imposed a duty on domestic distilled spirits was negatived by 36 to 16, and the bill was carried by 35 to 21.

Some days after the passage of this bill another question was brought forward which was understood to involve principles of deep interest to the government.

Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, had been the uniform advocate of a national bank. Believing that such an institution would be "of primary importance to the prosperous administration of the finances and of the greatest utility in the operations connected with the support of public credit," he had earnestly recommended its adoption in the first general system which he presented to the view of Congress, and, at the present session, had repeated that recommendation in a special report, containing a copious and perspicuous argument on the policy of the measure. A bill conforming to the plan he suggested was sent down from the Senate and was permitted to proceed, unmolested, in the House of Representatives, to the third reading. On the final question a great, and, it would seem, an unexpected opposition was made to its passage. Mr. Madison, Mr. Giles, General Jackson, and Mr. Stone spoke against it. The general utility of banking systems was not admitted, and the particular bill before the House was censured on its merits; but the great strength of the argument was directed against the constitutional authority of Congress to pass an act for incorporating a national bank.

The government of the United States, it was said, was limited, and the powers which it might legitimately exercise were enumerated in the constitution itself. In this

enumeration the power now contended for was not to be found. Not being expressly given it must be implied from those which were given or it could not be vested in the government. The clauses under which it could be claimed were then reviewed and critically examined, and it was contended that, on fair construction, no one of these could be understood to imply so important a power as that of creating a corporation.

The clause which enables Congress to pass all laws necessary and proper to execute the specified powers must, according to the natural and obvious force of the terms and the context, be limited to means necessary to the end and incident to the nature of the specified powers. The clause, it was said, was in fact merely declaratory of what would have resulted by unavoidable implication, as the appropriate, and as it were technical, means of executing those powers. Some members observed that "the true exposition of a necessary mean to produce a given end was that mean without which the end could not be produced."

The bill was supported by Mr. Ames, Mr. Sedgwick, Mr. Smith, of South Carolina, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Boudinot, Mr. Gerry, and Mr. Vining.

The utility of banking institutions was said to be demonstrated by their effects. In all commercial countries they had been resorted to as an instrument of great efficacy in mercantile transactions; and even in the United States their public and private advantages had been felt and acknowledged.

Respecting the policy of the measure no well-founded doubt could be entertained, but the objections to the constitutional authority of Congress deserved to be seriously considered.

That the government was limited by the terms of its

creation was not controverted; and that it could exercise only those powers which were conferred on it by the constitution was admitted. If, on examination, that instrument should be found to forbid the passage of the bill, it must be rejected, though it would be with deep regret that its friends would suffer such an opportunity of serving their country to escape for the want of a constitutional power to improve it.

In asserting the authority of the Legislature to pass the bill it was contended that incidental as well as express powers must necessarily belong to every government, and that, when a power is delegated to effect particular objects, all the known and usual means of effecting them must pass as incidental to it. To remove all doubts on this subject, the constitution of the United States had recognized the principle by enabling Congress to make all laws which may be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the powers vested in the government. They maintained the sound construction of this grant to be a recognition of an authority in the national Legislature to employ all the known and usual means for executing the powers vested in the government. They then took a comprehensive view of those powers and contended that a bank was a known and usual instrument by which several of them were exercised.

After a debate of great length, which was supported on both sides with ability and with that ardor which was naturally excited by the importance attached by each party to the principle in contest, the question was put and the bill was carried in the affirmative by a majority of nineteen votes.

The point which had been agitated with so much zeal in the House of Representatives was examined with equal deliberation by the executive. The cabinet was divided

upon it. Jefferson, the Secretary of State, and Randolph, the Attorney-General, conceived that Congress had clearly transcended their constitutional powers, while Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, with equal clearness, maintained the opposite opinion. The advice of each minister, with his reasoning in support of it, was required in writing, and their arguments were considered by the President with all that attention which the magnitude of the question and the interest taken in it by the opposing parties so eminently required. This deliberate investigation of the subject terminated in a conviction that the constitution of the United States authorized the measure, and the sanction of the Executive was given to the act.\*

In February, 1791, Vermont, having, in convention, adopted the constitution of the United States, was admitted to the Union. The result of the census of the United States, which had been ordered in 1790, was a total of 3,929,827 souls, of whom 697,897 were slaves.

Besides the establishment of the Bank of the United States and the passage of the excise law, Congress resolved upon having a mint for the national coinage; it authorized an increase of the army and the raising a military force to resist the Indians, and provided for the maintenance of these additional troops; it also appropriated above \$1,200,000 to various branches of the public service, making the expenses of the year \$4,000,000, part of which had to be met by loans, since the surplus of the former year had been applied to the paying off part of the national debt, as a former act of Congress had directed. We may mention, in this connection, that the exports of the year were computed to amount to some \$19,000,000 and the imports to about \$20,000,000.

\* Marshall.



Among the last acts of the present Congress, as already mentioned, was an act to augment the military establishment of the United States.

The earnest endeavors of Washington to give security to the northwestern frontiers, by pacific arrangements, having been entirely unavailing, it became his duty to employ such other means as were placed in his hands for the protection of the country. Confirmed by all his experience in the opinion that vigorous offensive operations alone could bring an Indian war to a happy conclusion, he had planned an expedition against the hostile tribes northwest of the Ohio as soon as the impracticability of effecting a treaty with them had been ascertained.

General Harmar, a veteran of the Revolution, who had received his appointment under the former government, was placed at the head of the Federal troops. On the 30th of September (1790) he marched from Fort Washington with 320 regulars. The whole army, when joined by the militia of Pennsylvania and Kentucky, amounted to 1,453 men. About the middle of October Colonel Harden, who commanded the Kentucky militia, and who had been also a continental officer of considerable merit, was detached at the head of 600 men, chiefly militia, to reconnoitre the ground and to ascertain the intentions of the enemy. On his approach the Indians set fire to their principal village and fled with precipitation to the wood. As the object of the expedition would be only half accomplished unless the savages could be brought to action and defeated, Colonel Harden was again detached at the head of 210 men, 30 of whom were regulars. About ten miles west of Chilicothe, where the main body of the army lay, he was attacked by a party of Indians. The Pennsylvanias, who composed his left column, had previously fallen in the rear, and the Kentuckians, disregarding the exertions

of their colonel and of a few other officers, fled on the first appearance of the enemy. The small corps of regulars, commanded by Lieutenant Armstrong, made a brave resistance. After twenty-three of them had fallen in the field the surviving seven made their escape and rejoined the army.

Notwithstanding this check the remaining towns on the Scioto were reduced to ashes, and the provisions laid up for the winter were entirely destroyed. This service being accomplished the army commenced its march toward Fort Washington. Being desirous of wiping off the disgrace which his arms had sustained, General Harmar halted about eight miles from Chilicothe and once more detached Colonel Harden with orders to find the enemy and bring on an engagement. His command consisted of 360 men, of whom 60 were regulars, commanded by Major Wyllys. Early the next morning this detachment reached the confluence of the St. Joseph and St. Mary, where it was divided into three columns. The left division, commanded by Colonel Harden in person, crossed the St. Joseph and proceeded up its western bank. The center, consisting of the Federal troops, was led by Major Wyllys up the eastern side of that river, and the right, under the command of Major M'Millan, marched along a range of heights which commanded the right flank of the center division. The columns had proceeded but a short distance when each was met by a considerable body of Indians, and a severe engagement ensued. The militia retrieved their reputation, and several of their bravest officers fell. The heights on the right having been, from some cause not mentioned, unoccupied by the American troops, the savages seized them early in the action, and attacked the right flank of the center with great fury. Although Major Wyllys was among the first who fell the battle was maintained by the

regulars with spirit, and considerable execution was done on both sides. At length the scanty remnant of this small band, quite overpowered by numbers, was driven off the ground, leaving fifty of their comrades, exclusive of Major Wyllys and Lieutenant Farthingham, dead upon the field. The loss sustained by the militia was also considerable. It amounted to upwards of 100 men, among whom were nine officers. After an engagement of extreme severity the detachment joined the main army, which continued its march to Fort Washington.

General Harmar, with what propriety it is not easy to discern, claimed the victory. He conceived, not entirely without reason, that the loss of a considerable number of men would be fatal to the Indians, although a still greater loss should be sustained by the Americans, because the savages did not possess a population from which they could replace the warriors who had fallen. The event, however, did not justify this opinion.

The information respecting this expedition was quickly followed by intelligence stating the deplorable condition of the frontiers. An address from the representatives of all the counties of Virginia, and those of Virginia bordering on the Ohio, was presented to the President, praying that the defense of the country might be committed to militia unmixed with regulars, and that they might immediately be drawn out to oppose "the exulting foe." To this address the President gave a conciliatory answer, but he understood too well the nature of the service to yield to the request it contained. Such were his communications to the Legislature that a regiment was added to the permanent military establishment, and he was authorized to raise a body of 2,000 men for six months, and to appoint a major-general, and a brigadier-general, to con-

tinue in command so long as he should think their services necessary.

With the 3d of March, 1791, terminated the first Congress elected under the constitution of the United States. "The party denominated Federal," says Marshall, "having prevailed at the elections, a majority of the members were steadfast friends of the Constitution, and were sincerely desirous of supporting a system they had themselves introduced, and on the preservation of which, in full health and vigor, they firmly believed the happiness of their fellow-citizens, and the respectability of the nation, greatly to depend. To organize a government, to retrieve the national character, to establish a system of revenue, and to create public credit, were among the arduous duties which were imposed upon them by the political situation of their country. With persevering labor, guided by no inconsiderable portion of virtue and intelligence, these objects were, in a great degree, accomplished. Out of the measures proposed for their attainment, questions alike intricate and interesting unavoidably arose. It is not in the nature of man to discuss such questions without strongly agitating the passions, and exciting irritations which do not readily subside.

"Had it ever been the happy and singular lot of America to see its national Legislature assemble uninfluenced by those prejudices which grew out of the previous divisions of the country, the many delicate points which they were under the necessity of deciding, could not have failed to disturb this enviable state of harmony, and to mingle some share of party spirit with their deliberations. But when the actual state of the public mind was contemplated, and due weight was given to the important consideration that at no very distant day a successor to the present chief magistrate must be elected, it was still less to be hoped

that the first Congress could pass away without producing strong and permanent dispositions in parties, to impute to each other designs unfriendly to the public happiness. As yet, however, these imputations did not extend to the President. His character was held sacred, and the purity of his motives was admitted by all. Some divisions were understood to have found their way into the cabinet. It was insinuated that between the Secretaries of State and of the Treasury very serious differences had arisen, but these high personages were believed to be equally attached to the President, who was not suspected of undue partiality to either. If his assent to the bill for incorporating the national bank produced discontent, the opponents of that measure seemed disposed to ascribe his conduct, in that instance, to his judgment, rather than to any prepossession in favor of the party by whom it was carried. The opposition, therefore, in Congress, to the measures of the government, seemed to be levelled at the Secretary of the Treasury, and at the northern members by whom those measures were generally supported, not at the President by whom they were approved. By taking this direction it made its way into the public mind, without being encountered by that devoted affection which a great majority of the people felt for the chief magistrate of the Union. In the meantime, the national prosperity was in a state of rapid progress; and the government was gaining, though slowly, in the public opinion. But in several of the State assemblies, especially in the southern division of the continent, serious evidences of dissatisfaction were exhibited, which demonstrated the jealousy with which the local sovereignties contemplated the powers exercised by the Federal Legislature."

A recent writer, speaking of the discussions in the cabinet respecting the bill establishing a national bank, says:



“Jefferson and Randolph were of opinion that Congress, in passing the bill, transcended the powers vested in them by the constitution. Hamilton, on the other hand, maintained it to be purely constitutional.

“It was not an easy task to unite two men of such opposite natures as Hamilton and Jefferson, and make them act in concert in the same cabinet. The critical state of affairs at the first adoption of the constitution, and the impartial preponderance of Washington alone could accomplish it. He applied himself to it with consummate perseverance and wisdom. At heart he felt a decided preference for Hamilton and his views. ‘By some,’ said he, ‘he is considered an ambitious man and therefore a dangerous one. That he is ambitious I readily grant, but his ambition is of that laudable kind which prompts a man to excel in whatever he takes in hand. He is enterprising, quick in his perceptions, and in his judgment intuitively great.’

“But it was only in 1798, in the freedom of retirement, that Washington spoke so explicitly. While in office, and between his two secretaries, he maintained toward them a strict reserve, and testified the same confidence in both. He believed both of them to be sincere and able; both of them necessary to the country and to himself. Jefferson was to him, not only a connecting tie, a means of influence with the popular party which rarely became the opposition; but he made use of him in the internal administration of his government as a counterpoise to the tendencies, and especially to the language, sometimes extravagant and inconsiderate, of Hamilton and his friends. He had interviews and consultations with each of them separately, upon the subjects which they were to discuss together, in order to remove or lessen beforehand their differences of opinion. He knew how to turn the merit and popularity



of each, with his own party, to the general good of the government, even to their own mutual advantage. He skilfully availed himself of every opportunity to employ them in a common responsibility. And when a disagreement too wide, and passions too impetuous, seemed to threaten an immediate rupture, he interposed, used exhortation and entreaty, and by his personal influence, by a frank and touching appeal to the patriotism and right-mindedness of the two rivals, he postponed the breaking forth of the evil which it was not possible to eradicate. On the bank question he required from each his arguments in writing, and after maturely weighing them both, he gave the sanction of his signature to the act passed by Congress for its incorporation. From the moment of the incorporation of the Bank of the United States parties assumed the almost perfect forms of organization and principles by which they are marked in our own day. The arguments and imputations of the Republican party, however, were not so much intended to apply to Washington and his measures as to Hamilton, who was considered and acknowledged by all as the head of the Federal party. This fact was sufficiently proved when Washington, at the close of the session of Congress, made an excursion into the southern States. His reception by men of all parties was ample testimony of the fact that he united all hearts, and that, however the measures or the constitution of government might be censured and disapproved, none would refuse to pour the grateful homage of free hearts into the bosom of their veteran chief." Of this excursion we shall give an account in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V.

### POLITICAL PARTIES DEVELOPED.

1791-1792.

WASHINGTON, having received from Congress more ample means for the protection of the frontiers against the Indians, now directed his attention (March, 1791) to an expedition which should carry the war into their own country; this, as we have already seen, being his favorite method of dealing with Indian hostilities. He accordingly appointed Maj.-Gen. Arthur St. Clair, governor of the territory northwest of the Ohio, commander-in-chief of the forces to be employed in the meditated expedition. This officer had served through the war of the Revolution with reputation, though it had never been his fortune to distinguish himself. The evacuation of Ticonderoga had indeed, at one time, subjected him to much public censure, but it was found, upon inquiry, to be unmerited. Other motives, in addition to the persuasion of his fitness for the service, induced Washington to appoint him. With the sword, the olive branch was still to be tendered, and it was thought advisable to place them in the same hands. The governor, having been made officially the negotiator with the tribes inhabiting the territories over which he presided, being a military man acquainted with the country into which the war was to be carried, possessing considerable influence with the inhabitants of the frontiers, and being so placed as to superintend the preparations for the expedi-

tion advantageously, seemed to have claims to the station which were not to be overlooked. It was also a consideration of some importance that the high rank he had held in the American army would obviate those difficulties in filling the inferior grades with men of experience, which might certainly be expected should a person who had acted in a less elevated station be selected for the chief command.

After making the necessary arrangements for recruiting the army Washington prepared to make his long contemplated tour through the southern States.

On the 19th of March (1791), in writing to Lafayette, he says: "The tender concern which you express on my late illness awakens emotions which words will not explain, and to which your own sensibility can best do justice. My health is now quite restored, and I flatter myself with a hope of a long exemption from sickness. On Monday next I shall enter on the practice of your friendly prescription of exercise, intending, at that time, to begin a journey to the southward, during which I propose visiting all the southern States."

This tour he performed in his own carriage, drawn by six horses, which were not changed during the journey, which occupied nearly three months. He was accompanied by one of his private secretaries, Major Jackson. Leaving his residence in Market street, Philadelphia, he set off in the latter part of March, and was escorted into Delaware by Mr. Jefferson and General Knox. On the 25th of March he arrived at Annapolis, where he was met by the people in a body, entertained at public dinners and a ball, and, after staying two days, was accompanied on his journey by the governor of Maryland, as far as Georgetown.

From this place, on the 29th of March, he writes to Gov.

Charles Pinckney, of South Carolina: "I had the pleasure of receiving your Excellency's obliging letter of the 8th instant last evening. I am thus far on my tour through the southern States, but as I travel with only one set of horses, and must make occasional halts, the progress of my journey is exposed to such uncertainty as admits not of fixing a day for my arrival at Charleston. While I express the grateful sense which I entertain of your Excellency's polite offer to accommodate me at your house during my stay in Charleston, your goodness will permit me to deny myself that pleasure. Having, with a view to avoid giving inconvenience to private families, early prescribed to myself the rule of declining all invitations to quarters on my journeys, I have been repeatedly under a similar necessity to the present, of refusing those offers of hospitality which would, otherwise, have been both pleasing and acceptable."

From Georgetown he proceeded to Mount Vernon, where the necessary attention to his private affairs, and some important correspondence on public business, detained him a week. Leaving Mount Vernon, and passing through Fredericksburg, where he dined with some of his old personal friends, he arrived at Richmond on the 11th of April (1791). His reception there was enthusiastic. He entered the city amidst the roar of cannon and the acclamations of the crowds of people who lined the streets through which he passed. In the evening there was a grand illumination; and during the two days which he remained there, the city was given up to festivities in honor of the favorite hero of Virginia. Similar tokens of welcome were exhibited at Petersburg, Halifax, Newburn, and Wilmington. On leaving the last-mentioned place he was rowed across Cape Fear river in a splendid barge, by six masters of vessels; and on his arrival at Charleston

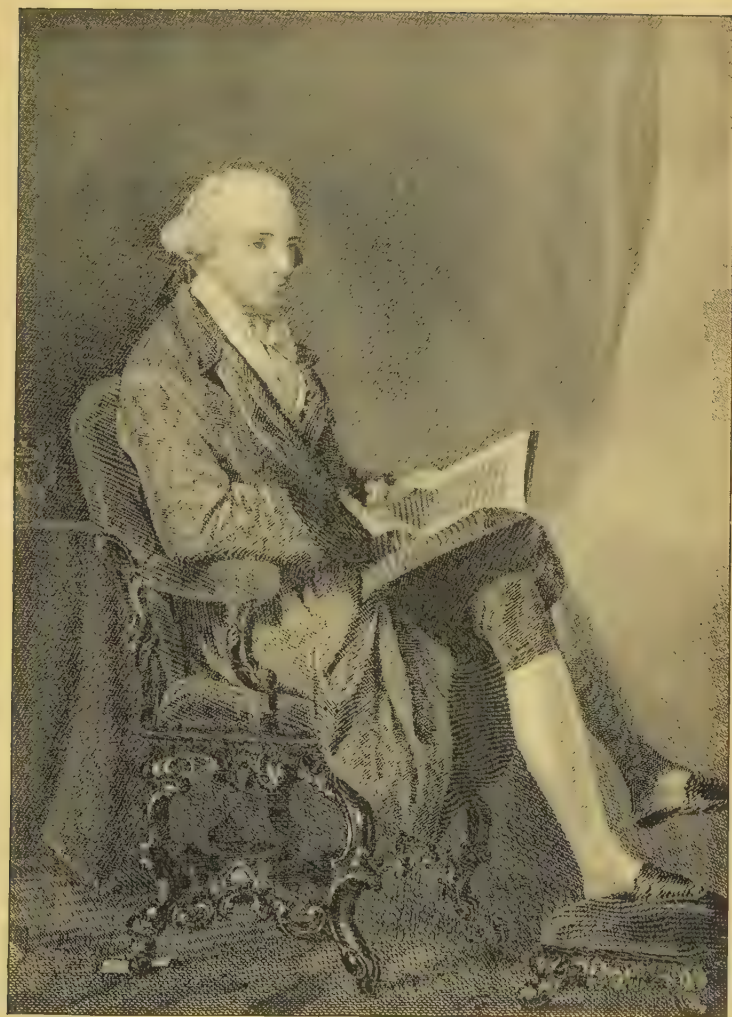
(May 2d) a similar token of honor was accorded to him on a larger scale. From Hadrill's Point, attended by a cortège of distinguished Carolinians, he was conveyed to the city in a twelve-oared barge, manned by thirteen captains of American ships, while other barges and floats, with bands of music and decorations, formed an imposing nautical procession. On landing he was received by Governor Pinckney, the civic authorities, the Cincinnati, and a brilliant military escort, who attended him in procession, amidst the ringing of bells, the firing of cannon, and the acclamations of the people, first to the Exchange, where he was welcomed in a formal address, and then to the house prepared for his reception.\*

During the week he remained in Charleston, he received the most lively and touching tokens of welcome and affection from the warm-hearted Carolinians, who strove to render him every species of honor. A corporation ball on a grand scale, a large dinner party at Governor Pinckney's mansion, another at Maj. Pierce Butler's, a concert, and a splendid public entertainment given by the merchants of the city, formed a portion only of the testimonials of homage and welcome given on this occasion to their illustrious guest.

He left Charleston on the 9th of May (1791), escorted to Ashley ferry by the governor and a large cavalcade. "At Perrysburg," says Dr. Griswold, "he was met the next day by a committee from Savannah, and, with General Wayne, Major Butler, Mr. Baillie, and Major Jackson, was conducted on board a richly decorated boat, in which the party were rowed down the river by nine sea captains, dressed in light-blue silk jackets, black satin breeches, white silk stockings, and round hats with black ribbons,

\* Griswold, "Republican Court."





JOHN HANCOCK.





inscribed with 'Long live the President,' in golden letters. Ten miles from the city they were met by other barges, from one of which a company of gentlemen sung the popular song, 'He comes, the hero comes!' As they drew near the harbor, every vessel and all the shore were discovered to be thronged with people. When the President stepped on the landing he was received by Gen. James Jackson, who introduced him to the mayor and aldermen; and he was soon after conducted, in the midst of a procession, through crowds of spectators, to the house prepared for his accommodation in St. James' square. The same evening he dined with the city authorities and a large number of other gentlemen, at Brown's Coffee House. Cannons were fired during the day, and at night the streets and the shipping were brilliantly illuminated. On Friday he dined with the Cincinnati of the State of Georgia, and attended a ball. On Saturday, accompanied by General McIntosh, who had been second in command under General Lincoln in storming them, he examined the remaining traces of the lines constructed by the British for the defense of Savannah in 1779, and dined with 200 citizens and strangers under a beautiful arbor, supported by numerous columns and ornamented with laurel and bay leaves, erected on an elevation which commanded a view of the town and the harbor.

"It has been frequently said of Washington, that 'no man in the army had a better eye for a horse,' and many of his letters show that he was by no means indifferent as to the qualities or treatment of his stud, during the war and afterward. A tour of 1,900 miles, with the same animals, was a severe test of their capacities, and before reaching Charleston he wrote to Mr. Lear, that though, all things considered, they had got on very well, yet his horses were decidedly worsted, and if brought back would

‘not cut capers, as they did on setting out.’ On the 13th of May, he says in a letter to the same correspondent: ‘I shall leave this place to-morrow; my horses, especially the two I bought just before I left Philadelphia, and my old white horse, are much worn down, and I have yet 150 or 200 miles of heavy sand to pass before I get fairly into the upper and firmer road.’

“On the way to Augusta he stopped to dine with the widow of his old friend and companion in arms, General Greene, at her seat called Mulberry Grove. On Wednesday, the 18th (May, 1791), Governor Telfair and the principal officers of the State left the capital, with a numerous train of citizens, and proceeded five miles toward Savannah to meet him, and he was conducted to his lodgings accompanied by thousands of people, who filled the air with joyous acclamations. That day he dined with a large party at the Grove, the governor’s private residence, near Augusta, where Mrs. Telfair assembled the ladies of the town to meet him at a ball in the evening; on Thursday he received and answered an address from the people, attended a public dinner, and was present at another ball; on Friday he visited the academy and dined again with the governor; and on Saturday he started again on his return, Augusta being the further point of his journey.

“Coming again into South Carolina, he was conducted to Columbia by General Winne, Col. Wade Hampton, and a large number of other citizens, and the next day dined with more than 200 of the principal men and women of the town and neighboring country at the State house, and in the evening attended a ball.

“On Wednesday, the 25th (May, 1791), he dined at Camden, and on the following morning visited the grave of the Baron de Kalb, the places where the British redoubts had been erected, Hobkirk Hill, where General Greene

was attacked by Lord Rawdon, and the plains where General Gates was engaged by Lord Cornwallis in 1780. Passing through Charlotte, Salisbury, Salem, Guilford, and other towns, in all of which the love and reverence of the people were exhibited in every variety of manner which taste and ingenuity could suggest, he arrived at Mount Vernon on the 12th of June.

“He remained at his seat between three and four weeks, during which he was occupied with his private affairs, and, with Major L’Enfant and others, with the location of the new seat of government, on the banks of the Potomac. On Thursday, the last day of June (1791), he started for Philadelphia by way of Frederick, York, and Lancaster, and arrived at the presidential residence about noon on the 6th of July, having been absent nearly three months, and during that period performed a journey of 1,887 miles.”\*

Washington was highly pleased with the result of his observations during this tour. In a letter to Hamilton (June 13th), from Mount Vernon on his return, we have occasion to notice the benefit he derived from his habits of method and forethought in any undertaking which he contemplated. “My return to this place,” he writes, “is sooner than I expected, owing to the uninterruptedness of my journey by sickness, from bad weather, or accidents of any kind whatsoever. Having obtained, before I left Philadelphia, the most accurate accounts I could get there of the places and roads through and by which I was to perform my tour, and the distances between the former, I formed my line of march accordingly, fixing each day’s journey and the day to halt; from neither of which have I departed in a single instance, except staying, from a par-

\* “Republican Court.”

ticular circumstance, two days in Columbia, and none at Charlotte, instead of one at each, and crossing James river at Carter's ferry, in place of Taylor's, as was my original intention. But the improbability of performing a tour of 1,700 miles (I have already rode more) with the same set of horses, without encountering any accident, by which a deviation would be rendered unavoidable, appeared so great, that I allowed eight days for casualties, and six to refresh at this place, when I should have returned to it. None of the former having happened, accounts for the fourteen days I shall remain here before the meeting of the commissioners."\*

In relation to this tour in the southern States Marshall says: "In passing through them he was received universally with the same marks of affectionate attachment which he had experienced in the northern and central parts of the Union. To the sensibilities which these demonstrations of the regard and esteem of good men could not fail to inspire, was added the high gratification produced by observing the rapid improvements of the country, and the advances made by the government in acquiring the confidence of the people." The numerous letters written by him after his return to Philadelphia, attest the agreeable impressions made by these causes. "In my late tour through the southern States," said he, in a letter of the 28th of July, to Mr. Gouverneur Morris, "I experienced great satisfaction in seeing the good effects of the general government in that part of the Union. The people at large have felt the security which it gives, and the equal justice which it administers to them. The farmer, the merchant, and the mechanic have seen their several interests at-

\* For designating the site of the new seat of government. Washington remained with the commissioners several days engaged in this business.

tended to, and from thence they unite in placing a confidence in their representatives, as well as in those in whose hands the execution of the laws is placed. Industry has there taken place of idleness, and economy of dissipation. Two or three years of good crops, and a ready market for the produce of their lands, have put everyone in good humor, and, in some instances, they even impute to the government what is due only to the goodness of Providence.

“The establishment of public credit is an immense point gained in our national concerns. This, I believe, exceeds the expectation of the most sanguine among us; and a late instance, unparalleled in this country, has been given of the confidence reposed in our measures, by the rapidity with which the subscriptions to the Bank of the United States were filled. In two hours after the books were opened by the commissioners the whole number of shares was taken up, and 4,000 more applied for than were allowed by the institution. This circumstance was not only pleasing, as it related to the confidence in government, but also as it exhibited an unexpected proof of the resources of our citizens.”

This visit had undoubtedly some tendency to produce the good disposition which Washington observed with so much pleasure. The affections are, perhaps, more intimately connected with the judgment than we are disposed to admit; and the appearance of the chief magistrate of the Union, who was the object of general love and reverence, could not be without its influence in conciliating the minds of many to the government he administered, and to its measures. But this progress toward conciliation was, perhaps, less considerable than was indicated by appearances. The hostility to the government, which was coeval with its existence, though diminished, was far from



being subdued; and under this smooth exterior was concealed a mass of discontent, which, though it did not obtrude itself on the view of the man who united almost all hearts, was active in its exertions to effect its objects.

The difficulties which must impede the recruiting service in a country where coercion is not employed, and where the common wages of labor greatly exceed the pay of a soldier, protracted the completion of the regiments to a late season of the year, but the summer was not permitted to waste in total inaction.

The act passed at the last session for the defense of the frontiers, in addition to its other provisions, had given to the President an unlimited power to call mounted militia into the field. Under this authority two expeditions had been conducted against the villages on the Wabash, in which a few of the Indian warriors were killed, some of their old men, women, and children were made prisoners, and several of their towns and fields of corn were destroyed. The first was led by General Scott, in May, and the second by General Wilkinson, in September. These desultory incursions had not much influence on the war.

It was believed in the United States that the hostility of the Indians was kept up by the traders living in their villages. These persons had, generally, resided in the United States, and, having been compelled to leave the country, in consequence of the part they had taken during the war of the Revolution, felt the resentments which banishment and confiscation seldom fail to inspire. Their enmities were ascribed by many, perhaps unjustly, to the temper of the government in Canada; but some countenance seemed to be given to this opinion by intelligence that, about the commencement of the preceding campaign, large supplies of ammunition had been delivered from the British posts on the lakes to the Indians at war with the United States. While Washington was on his southern

tour, he addressed a letter to the Secretary of State, to be communicated to Colonel Beckwith, who still remained in Philadelphia as the informal representative of his nation, in which he expressed his surprise and disappointment at this interference, by the servants or subjects of a foreign State, in a war prosecuted by the United States for the sole purpose of procuring peace and safety for the inhabitants of their frontiers.

On receiving this communication Colonel Beckwith expressed his disbelief that the supplies mentioned had been delivered; but, on being assured of the fact, he avowed the opinion that the transaction was without the knowledge of Lord Dorchester, to whom he said he should communicate, without delay, the ideas of the American government on the subject.

On the 24th of October (1791) the second Congress assembled in Philadelphia. In his speech, at the opening of the session, the President expressed his great satisfaction at the prosperous situation of the country, and particularly mentioned the rapidity with which the shares in the Bank of the United States were subscribed, as "among the striking and pleasing evidences which presented themselves, not only of confidence in the government, but of resources in the community."

Adverting to the measures which had been taken in execution of the laws and resolutions of the last session, "the most important of which," he observed, "respected the defense and security of the western frontiers," he had, he said "negotiated provisional treaties and used other proper means to attach the wavering, and to confirm in their friendship the well-disposed tribes of Indians. The means which he had adopted for a pacification with those of a hostile description having proved unsuccessful, offensive operations had been directed, some of which had

proved completely successful, and others were still depending. Overtures of peace were still continued to the deluded tribes, and it was sincerely to be desired that all need of coercion might cease, and that an intimate intercourse might succeed, calculated to advance the happiness of the Indians, and to attach them firmly to the United States."

In marking the line of conduct which ought to be maintained for the promotion of this object, he strongly recommended "justice to the savages, and such rational experiments for imparting to them the blessings of civilization, as might from time to time suit their condition;" and then concluded this subject with saying: "A system corresponding with the mild principles of religion and philanthropy, toward an unenlightened race of men whose happiness materially depends on the conduct of the United States, would be as honorable to the national character, as conformable to the dictates of sound policy."

After stating that measures had been taken for carrying into execution the act laying duties on distilled spirits, he added: "The impressions with which this law has been received by the community have been, upon the whole, such as were to have been expected among enlightened and well-disposed citizens, from the propriety and necessity of the measure. The novelty, however, of the tax, in a considerable part of the United States, and a misconception of some of its provisions, have given occasion, in particular places, to some degree of discontent. But it is satisfactory to know that this disposition yields to proper explanations, and more just apprehensions of the true nature of the law. And I entertain a full confidence that it will, in all, give way to motives which arise out of a just sense of duty, and a virtuous regard to the public welfare.

"If there are any circumstances in the law, which, con-

sistently with its main design, may be so varied as to remove any well-intentioned objections that may happen to exist, it will comport with a wise moderation to make the proper variations. It is desirable, on all occasions, to unite with a steady and firm adherence to constitutional and necessary acts of government, the fullest evidence of a disposition, as far as may be practicable, to consult the wishes of every part of the community, and to lay the foundations of the public administration in the affections of the people."

"The answers of the two houses noticed, briefly and generally, the various topics of the speech; and, though perhaps less warm than those of the preceding Congress, manifested great respect for the executive magistrate, and an undiminished confidence in his patriotic exertions to promote the public interests.

Soon after Congress was organized for business a warm debate sprung up in relation to the new apportionment of representatives, in accordance with the census, which had been taken in the preceding year, and the results of which were now ready for the consideration of Congress. The contest was not put to rest till the following April (1792); and not till the third bill was constructed did the two houses agree. The first proposal made by the representatives was to adopt the lowest ratio allowed by the constitution — 30,000, which would have raised their numbers to 113, but there would have been large fractions of population in the northern States left unrepresented. The Senate, to lessen those disfranchised remnants, raised the ratio to 33,000; but it was alleged that then there were fractions, though not so large, remaining in the southern States. The house would not accept the change, and reiterated its former proposal in a new bill, which also arranged the taking of another census before the expiration of ten years; but the Senate refused its assent to this, and,

instead, increased the numbers to 120 by assigning representatives to the largest fractions. This, which violated the letter of the constitution, excited greater heat than ever, and the old threat of breaking up the Union was resorted to. A committee of conference was demanded at length, and in the end the scheme of the Senate was carried by a majority of two out of sixty votes. This decision has been remarked upon as having a curious bearing upon the old political controversies, the representatives of the southern States being found rejecting the amendment of the Senate, which embodied their own State sovereignty principle; and those of the North accepting it, although they were most in favor of the opposite principle of polity.

Washington very justly considered this mode of apportionment as contrary to the constitution, and on the 5th of April returned the bill to Congress, with his objections. The first was, that the constitution had prescribed that representatives should be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, and that there was no one proportion or division which, applied to the respective States, would yield the number and allotment of representatives proposed by the bill; the second, that by the constitution, the number of representatives should not exceed one for every 30,000, which restriction, by the fair and obvious construction, was to be applied to the separate and respective States, and that the bill had allotted to eight States more than one for every 30,000. This was the *first* instance in which the President had exercised his *veto* upon any act of Congress.\* The

\* The following is the message which he delivered on this occasion:

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I have maturely considered the act passed by the two Houses, entitled "An act for the apportionment of representatives among

bill, not being repassed by two-thirds of both houses, was rejected. A bill afterward passed, April 9, 1792, by a vote of thirty-four to thirty, apportioning the representatives agreeable to a ratio of one for every 33,000 in each State, which received the sanction of the President, and thus, this interesting part of the constitution was finally settled.

During this session of Congress an act passed for establishing a uniform militia.

Washington had manifested, from the commencement of his administration, a peculiar degree of solicitude on this subject, and had repeatedly urged it on Congress.

In his speech at the opening of the present session, he again called the attention of the Legislature to it, and at length a law was enacted, though it was less efficacious than the plan reported by General Knox, the Secretary of War.

In December (1791) intelligence was received by the President, and immediately communicated to Congress, that the American army had been totally defeated on the 4th of the preceding month.

the several States according to the first enumeration," and I return it to your House, wherein it originated, with the following objections.

First. The constitution has prescribed that representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, and there is no proportion or divisor which, applied to the respective numbers of the States, will yield the number and allotment of representatives proposed by the bill.

Secondly. The constitution has also provided that the number of representatives shall not exceed one for thirty thousand—which restriction is by the context, and by fair and obvious construction, to be applied to the separate and respective numbers of the States—and the bill has allotted to eight of the States more than one for thirty thousand.



Although the most prompt and judicious measures had been taken to raise the troops and to march them to the frontiers, they could not be assembled in the neighborhood of Fort Washington until the month of September, nor was the establishment even then completed.

The immediate objects of the expedition were to destroy the Indian villages on the Miami, to expel the savages from that country, and to connect it with the Ohio by a chain of posts which would prevent their return during the war.

On the 7th of September (1791) the regulars moved from their camp in the vicinity of Fort Washington, and marching directly north, toward the object of their destination, established two intermediate posts, Forts Hamilton and Jefferson, at the distance of rather more than forty miles from each other, as places of deposit and of security either for convoys of provisions which might follow the army, or for the army itself should any disaster befall it. The last of these works, Fort Jefferson, was not completed until the 24th of October, before which time reinforcements were received of about 360 militia. After placing garrisons in the forts the effective number of the army, including militia, amounted to rather less than 2,000 men. With this force the general continued his march, which was rendered both slow and laborious by the necessity of opening a road. Small parties of Indians were frequently seen hovering about them and some unimportant skirmishes took place. As the army approached the country in which they might expect to meet an enemy about sixty of the militia deserted in a body. This diminution of force was not in itself an object of much concern. But there was reason to fear that the example, should those who set it be permitted to escape with impunity, would be extensively followed, and it was reported to be the inten-

tion of the deserters to plunder convoys of provisions which were advancing at some distance in the rear. To prevent mischiefs of so serious a nature the general detached Major Hamtranck with the first regiment in pursuit of the deserters, and directed him to secure the provisions under a strong guard.

The army, consisting of about 1,400 effective rank and file, continued its march, and, on the 3d of November, encamped about fifteen miles south of the Miami villages. The right wing, under the command of General Butler, formed the first line and lay with a creek, about twelve yards wide, immediately in its front. The left wing, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Darke, formed the second, and between the two lines was an interval of about seventy yards. The right flank was supposed to be secured by the creek, by a steep bank, and by a small body of troops; the left was covered by a party of cavalry and by piquets. The militia crossed the creek and advanced about a quarter of a mile in front, where they also encamped in two lines. On their approach a few Indians who had shown themselves on the opposite side of the creek fled with precipitation.

At this place the general intended to throw up a slight work for the security of the baggage, and, after being joined by Major Hamtranck, to march, as unincumbered and as expeditiously as possible, to the villages he purposed to destroy.

In both of these designs he was anticipated. About half an hour before sunrise on the day following, just after the troops had been dismissed from the parade, an unexpected attack was made upon the militia, who fled in the utmost confusion, and rushing into camp through the first line of Continental troops, which had been formed the instant the first gun was discharged, threw them too

into disorder. The exertions of the officers to restore order were not entirely successful. The Indians pressed close upon the heels of the flying militia and engaged General Butler with great intrepidity. The action instantly became extremely warm, and the fire of the assailants, passing round both flanks of the first line, was, in a few minutes, poured with equal fury on the rear division. Its greatest weight was directed against the center of each wing, where the artillery was posted, and the artillerists were mowed down in great numbers. Firing from the ground and from the shelter which the woods afforded, the assailants were scarcely seen but when springing from one cover to another, in which manner they advanced close up to the American lines and to the very mouths of the field pieces. They fought with the daring courage of men whose trade is war and who are stimulated by all those passions which can impel the savage mind to vigorous exertions.

While some of the American soldiers performed their duty with the utmost resolution, others seemed dismayed and terrified. Of this conduct the officers were, as usual, the victims. With a fearlessness which the occasion required, they exposed themselves to the most imminent dangers, and, in their efforts to change the face of affairs, fell in great numbers.

For several days the Commander-in-Chief had been afflicted with a severe disease, under which he still labored, and which must have greatly affected him, but, though unable to display that activity which would have been useful in this severe conflict, neither the feebleness of his body nor the peril of his situation could prevent his delivering his orders with judgment and with self-possession.

It was soon perceived that the American fire could produce, on a concealed enemy, no considerable effect, and

that the only hope of victory was placed in the bayonet. At the head of the second regiment, which formed the left of the left wing, Lieutenant-Colonel Darke made an impetuous charge upon the enemy, forced them from their ground with some loss and drove them about 400 yards. He was followed by that whole wing, but the want of a sufficient number of riflemen to press this advantage deprived him of the benefit which ought to have been derived from this effort, and, as soon as he gave over the pursuit, the Indians renewed their attack. In the meantime General Butler was mortally wounded, the left of the right wing was broken, the artillerists almost to a man killed, the guns seized, and the camp penetrated by the enemy. With his own regiment and with the battalions commanded by Majors Butler and Clarke, Darke was ordered again to charge with the bayonet. These orders were executed with intrepidity and momentary success. The Indians were driven out of the camp, and the artillery recovered. But while they were pressed in one point by the bravest of the American troops, their fire was kept up from every other with fatal effect. Several times particular corps charged them, always with partial success, but no universal effort could be made, and in every charge a great loss of officers was sustained, the consequences of which were severely felt. Instead of keeping their ranks, and executing the orders which were given, a great proportion of the soldiers flocked together in crowds and were shot down without resistance. To save the remnant of his army was all that remained to be done, and about half past 9 in the morning General St. Clair ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Darke, with the Second regiment, to charge a body of Indians who had intercepted their retreat and to gain the road. Major Clarke, with his battalion, was directed to cover the rear. These orders were executed and a dis-

orderly flight commenced. The pursuit was kept up about four miles, when, fortunately for the surviving Americans, that avidity for plunder which is a ruling passion among savages, called back the victorious Indians to the camp, where the spoils of their vanquished foes were to be divided. The routed troops continued their flight to Fort Jefferson, a distance of about thirty miles, throwing away their arms on the road. At this place they met Major Hamtranck with the First regiment, and a council of war was called to deliberate on the course to be pursued. As this regiment was far from restoring the strength of the morning, it was determined not to attempt to retrieve the fortune of the day, and, leaving the wounded at Fort Jefferson, the army continued its retreat to Fort Washington.

In this disastrous battle the loss on the part of the Americans was very great when compared with the numbers engaged. Thirty-eight commissioned officers were killed upon the field, and 593 noncommissioned officers and privates were slain and missing. Twenty-one commissioned officers, several of whom afterward died of their wounds, and 242 noncommissioned officers and privates were wounded. Among the dead was the brave and much-lamented General Butler. This gallant officer had served through the war of the Revolution, and had, on more than one occasion, distinguished himself in a remarkable manner. In the list of those who shared his fate were the names of many other excellent officers who had participated in all the toils, the dangers, and the glory of that long conflict which terminated in the independence of their country. At the head of the list of wounded were Lieutenant-Colonels Gibson and Darke, Major Butler, and Adjutant-General Sargent, all of whom were veteran officers of great merit, who displayed their accustomed brav-

ery on this unfortunate day. General St. Clair, in his official letter, observed: "The loss the public has sustained by the fall of so many officers, particularly of General Butler and Major Ferguson, cannot be too much regretted, but it is a circumstance that will alleviate the misfortune in some measure, that all of them fell most gallantly doing their duty."

From the weight of the fire and the circumstance of his being attacked nearly at the same time in front and rear, General St. Clair was of opinion that he was overpowered by numbers. The intelligence afterward collected would make the Indian force to consist of from 1,000 to 1,500 warriors. Of their loss no estimate could be made; the probability is that it bore no proportion to that sustained by the American army.

Nothing could be more unexpected than this severe disaster. The public had confidently anticipated a successful campaign and could not believe that the general who had been unfortunate had not been culpable.

General St. Clair requested with earnestness that a court-martial should sit on his conduct, but this request could not be granted, because the army did not furnish a sufficient number of officers of a grade to form a court for his trial on military principles. Late in the session a committee of the House of Representatives was appointed to inquire into the cause of the failure of the expedition, whose report, in explicit terms, exculpated St. Clair. This inquiry, however, was instituted rather for the purpose of investigating the conduct of civil than of military officers, and was not conducted by military men. More satisfactory testimony in favor of St. Clair is furnished by the circumstance that he still retained the undiminished esteem and good opinion of the President.\*

\* Marshall.



The confidence of Washington in St. Clair, however, had been very severely shaken on his first receiving intelligence of his defeat. This fact is known by the recent publication of an anecdote communicated by Mr. Lear to the Hon. Richard Rush, and by him inserted in his "Washington in Domestic Life," as follows:

"An anecdote I derived from Colonel Lear shortly before his death in 1816," says Mr. Rush, "may here be related, showing the height to which his (Washington's) passion would rise yet be controlled. It belongs to his domestic life which I am dealing with, having occurred under his own roof, whilst it marks public feeling the most intense and points to the moral of his life. I give it in Colonel Lear's words as nearly as I can, having made a note of them at the time.

"Toward the close of a winter's day in 1791, an officer in uniform was seen to dismount in front of the President's in Philadelphia, and, giving the bridle to his servant, knocked at the door of his mansion. Learning from the porter that the President was at dinner, he said he was on public business and had dispatches for the President. A servant was sent into the dining-room to give the information to Mr. Lear, who left the table and went into the hall, where the officer repeated what he had said. Mr. Lear replied that, as the President's secretary, he would take charge of the dispatches and deliver them at the proper time. The officer made answer that he had just arrived from the western army, and his orders were to deliver them with all promptitude, and to the President in person, but that he would wait his directions. Mr. Lear returned and in a whisper imparted to the President what had passed. General Washington rose from the table and went to the officer. He was back in a short time, made a word of apology for his absence, but no allusion to the

cause of it. He had company that day. Everything went on as usual. Dinner over, the gentlemen passed to the drawing-room of Mrs. Washington, which was open in the evening. The general spoke courteously to every lady in the room, as was his custom. His hours were early, and by 10 o'clock all the company had gone. Mrs. Washington and Mr. Lear remained. Soon Mrs. Washington left the room.

"The general now walked backward and forward slowly for some minutes without speaking. Then he sat down on a sofa by the fire, telling Mr. Lear to sit down. To this moment there had been no change in his manner since his interruption at table. Mr. Lear now perceived emotion. This rising in him, he broke out suddenly: 'It's all over! St. Clair's defeated — routed — the officers nearly all killed — the men by wholesale — the rout complete — too shocking to think of — and a surprise into the bargain!'

"He uttered all this with great vehemence. Then he paused, got up from the sofa, and walked about the room several times, agitated but saying nothing. Near the door he stopped short and stood still a few seconds, when his wrath became terrible.

"'Yes,' he burst forth, 'here on this very spot I took leave of him; I wished him success and honor. You have your instructions, I said, from the Secretary of War; I had a strict eye to them, and will add but one word — beware of a surprise! I repeat it — beware of a surprise! You know how the Indians fight us. He went off with that as my last solemn warning thrown into his ears. And yet! to suffer that army to be cut to pieces — hacked, butchered, tomahawked — by a surprise — the very thing I guarded him against! O God, O God, he's worse than a murderer! How can he answer it to his country! The

blood of the slain is upon him — the curse of widows and orphans — the curse of Heaven!’

“This torrent came out in tones appalling. His very frame shook. It was awful said Mr. Lear. More than once he threw his hands up as he hurled imprecations upon St. Clair. Mr. Lear remained speechless — awed into breathless silence.

“The roused chief sat down on the sofa once more. He seemed conscious of his passion and uncomfortable. He was silent. His warmth beginning to subside, he at length said in an altered voice: ‘This must not go beyond this room.’ Another pause followed — a longer one — when he said in a tone quite low: ‘General St. Clair shall have justice. I looked hastily through the dispatches, saw the whole disaster, but not all the particulars. I will receive him without displeasure; I will hear him without prejudice. He shall have full justice.’

“He was now, said Mr. Lear, perfectly calm. Half an hour had gone by. The storm was over, and no sign of it was afterward seen in his conduct or heard in his conversation. The result is known. The whole case was investigated by Congress. St. Clair was exculpated and regained the confidence Washington had in him when appointing him to that command. He had put himself into the thickest of the fight, and escaped unhurt, though so ill as to be carried on a litter, and unable to mount his horse without help.”

This anecdote might, at first, seem discreditable to Washington, as exhibiting the mighty strength of his passions when aroused. But upon mature consideration it does him great honor, affording equal evidence of his power of self-control, his public spirit, his disinterestedness, and his candor.

The Indian war now assumed a still more serious as-

pect. There was reason to fear that the hostile tribes would derive a great accession of strength from the impression which their success would make upon their neighbors; and the reputation of the government was deeply concerned in retrieving the fortune of its arms, and affording protection to its citizens. The President, therefore, lost no time in causing the estimates for a competent force to be prepared and laid before Congress. In conformity with a report made by the Secretary of War, a bill was brought into the House of Representatives, directing three additional regiments of infantry and a squadron of cavalry to be raised, to serve for three years, if not sooner discharged. The whole military establishment, if completed, would amount to about 5,000 men. The additional regiments, however, were to be disbanded as soon as peace should be concluded with the Indians; and the President was authorized to discharge, or to forbear to raise any part of them, "in case events should, in his judgment, render his so doing consistent with the public safety."

This bill met with great opposition. A motion was made to strike out the section which authorized an augmentation of force. This led to a very animated debate, in which the opposition exhibited a determination to embarrass the administration by defeating even the most necessary and useful measures it might propose. The public spirit and good sense of the majority, however, prevailed.

The motion for striking out the section was lost, and the bill was carried for the augmentation of force required by the executive.

The treasury was not in a condition to meet the demands upon it, which the increased expenses of the war would unavoidably occasion, and sources of additional

revenue were to be explored. A select committee, to whom this subject was referred, brought in a resolution directing Mr. Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, to report his opinion to the House, on the best mode of raising those additional supplies which the public service might require for the current year.

This proposition gave rise to a very animated debate.

It will be recollected that when the act for establishing the Treasury Department was under consideration, the clause which rendered it the duty of the secretary to digest and report plans for the improvement and management of the revenue, and for the support of public credit, was earnestly opposed. A large majority, however, was in favor of the principle, and, after being so modified as only to admit a report if required by the House, it was retained in the bill. In complying with the various resolutions of Congress, calling for reports on subjects connected with his department, Hamilton had submitted plans which, having been profoundly considered, were well digested, and accompanied by arguments, the force of which it was difficult to resist. His measures were generally supported by a majority of Congress; and, while the high credit of the United States was believed to attest their wisdom, the masterly manner in which his reports were drawn, contributed to raise still higher that reputation for great talents which he had long possessed. To the further admission of these reports, it was determined, on this occasion, to make a vigorous resistance.

But the opposition was not successful. On taking the question the resolution was carried, thirty-one members voting in its favor, and twenty-seven against it.

The report made by Hamilton, in pursuance of this resolution, recommended certain augmentations of the duties on imports, and was immediately referred to the considera-

tion of a committee of the whole House. Resolutions were then passed which were to form the basis of a bill; and which adopted, not only the principles, but, with the exception of a few unimportant alterations, the minute details of the report.

Before the question was taken on the bill a motion was made to limit its duration, the vote upon which marked the progress of opinion in the House respecting those systems of finance which were believed to have established the credit of the United States.

Hamilton had deemed it indispensable to the creation of public credit that the appropriations of funds for the payment of the interest, and the gradual redemption of the principal of the national debt, should be not only sufficient, but permanent also. A party was found in the first Congress who opposed this principle, and were in favor of retaining a full power over the subject in each branch of the Legislature, by making annual appropriations. The arguments which had failed in Congress appear to have been more successfully employed with the people. Among the multiplied vices which were ascribed to the funding system, it was charged with introducing a permanent and extensive mortgage of funds, which was alleged to strengthen unduly the hands of the executive magistrate, and to be one of the many evidences which existed of monarchical propensities in those who administered the government.

The report lately made by Hamilton, and the bill founded on that report, contemplated a permanent increase of the duties on certain specified articles, and a permanent appropriation of the revenue arising from them to the purposes of the national debt. Thirty-one members were in favor of the motion for limiting the duration of the bill, and only thirty against it. By the rules of the House, the



speaker has a right first to vote as a member, and, if the numbers should then be equally divided, to decide as speaker. Being opposed to the limitation, the motion was lost by his voice, and Hamilton's measure was carried through in its original form.

On the 8th of May (1792), after an active and interesting session, Congress adjourned to the first Monday in November.

Among the bills passed at this session of Congress the most important were that for the apportionment of the representatives, and that for the augmentation of the military force, inasmuch as the discussion of these measures served to develop the political parties which had begun to divide Congress and the people. In apportioning the representatives many members of Congress endeavored to obtain the largest possible number, in order to preserve the rights of the States and check the power of the executive. On the same principles the army bill was opposed, as having a tendency to increase executive power and patronage, and thus endanger the liberties of the country.

Throughout the United States the party opposed to the constitution had charged its supporters with a desire to establish a monarchy on the ruins of Republican government; and the constitution itself was alleged to contain principles which would prove the truth of this charge. The leaders of that party had, therefore, been ready, from the instant the government came into operation, to discover, in all its measures, those monarchical tendencies which they had perceived in the instrument they opposed.

The salaries allowed to public officers, though so low\*

\* The salary of the Secretary of State, which was the highest, was \$3,500; that of the Secretary of the Treasury was \$2,000. Hamilton was finally obliged to resign, to gain a living.

as not to afford a decent maintenance to those who resided at the seat of government, were declared to be so enormously high, as clearly to manifest a total disregard of that simplicity and economy which were the characteristics of republics.

The levees of the President, and the evening parties of Mrs. Washington, were said to be imitations of regal institutions, designed to accustom the American people to the pomp and manners of European courts. The Vice-President, too, was said to keep up the state and dignity of a monarch, and to illustrate, by his conduct, the principles which were inculcated in his political works.

The Indian war, they alleged, was misconducted, and unnecessarily prolonged, for the purposes of expending the public money, and of affording a pretext for augmenting the military establishment, and increasing the revenue.

All this prodigal waste of the money of the people was designed to keep up the national debt, and the influence it gave the government; which, united with standing armies and immense revenues, would enable their rulers to rivet the chains which they were secretly forging. Every prediction which had been uttered respecting the anti-Republican principles of the government, was said to be rapidly verifying, and that which was disbelieved as prophecy, was daily becoming history. If a remedy for these ills was not found in the increased representation of the people which would take place at the ensuing elections, they would become too monstrous to be borne; and when it was recollected that the division of opinion was marked by a geographical line, there was reason to fear that the Union would be broken into one or more confederacies.

These irritable symptoms had assumed appearances of increased malignity during the session of Congress which had just terminated; and, to Washington, who firmly be-

lieved that the Union and the liberty of the States depended on the preservation of the government, they were the more unpleasant and the more alarming because they were displayed in full force in his cabinet.

The feud between Jefferson and Hamilton, to which we have already referred, still continued in full force, and they were regarded, as in fact they were, respectively, the heads of the two parties. They disagreed not only on the internal affairs but on the foreign policy of the government: Jefferson having a leaning towards the Revolutionists of France, and Hamilton favoring a conciliatory policy toward Great Britain.

In all popular governments the press is the most ready channel by which the opinions and the passions of the few are communicated to the many; and of the press, the two great parties forming in the United States sought to avail themselves. The "Gazette of the United States" supported the systems of Hamilton, while other papers enlisted themselves under the banners of the opposition. Conspicuous among these was the "National Gazette," a paper edited by Philip Freneau, the poet, a clerk in the Department of State. The avowed purpose for which Jefferson patronized this paper was to present to the eye of the American people European intelligence derived from the "Leyden Gazette," instead of English papers; but it soon became the vehicle of calumny against the funding and banking systems; against the duty on home-made spirits, which was denominated an excuse, and against the men who had proposed and supported those measures. With, perhaps, equal asperity, the papers attached to the party which had defended these systems, assailed the motives of the leaders of the opposition.

This schism in his cabinet was a subject of extreme mortification to Washington. Entertaining a high respect for

the talents, and a real esteem for the characters of both gentlemen, he was unwilling to part with either, and exerted all the influence he possessed to effect a reconciliation between them. In a letter of the 23d of August (1792), addressed to Jefferson, after reviewing the critical situation of the United States with respect to its external relations, he thus expressed himself on this delicate subject: "How unfortunate, and how much is it to be regretted then, that while we are encompassed on all sides with avowed enemies and insidious friends, internal dissensions should be harassing and tearing our vitals. The last, to me, is the most serious, the most alarming, and the most afflicting of the two, and, without more charity for the opinions of one another in governmental matters, or some more infallible criterion by which the truth of speculative opinions, before they have undergone the test of experience, are to be forejudged, than has yet fallen to the lot of fallibility, I believe it will be difficult, if not impracticable, to manage the reins of government, or to keep the parts of it together; for if, instead of laying our shoulders to the machine, after measures are decided on, one pulls this way, and another that, before the utility of the thing is fairly tried, it must inevitably be torn asunder; and, in my opinion, the fairest prospect of happiness and prosperity that ever was presented to man will be lost, perhaps forever.

"My earnest wish and my fondest hope, therefore, is, that instead of wounding suspicions and irritating charges, there may be liberal allowances, mutual forbearances, and temporizing yielding on all sides. Under the exercise of these, matters will go on smoothly; and, if possible, more prosperously. Without them everything must rub; the these matters will go on smoothly, and, if possible, more wheels of government will clog; our enemies will triumph, and, by throwing their weight into the disaffected scale,

may accomplish the ruin of the goodly fabric we have been erecting.

“I do not mean to apply this advice, or these observations, to any particular person or character. I have given them in the same general terms to other officers of the government, because the disagreements which have arisen from difference of opinions and the attacks which have been made upon almost all the measures of government, and most of its executive officers, have for a long time past filled me with painful sensations, and cannot fail, I think, of producing unhappy consequences at home and abroad.”

In a subsequent letter to Jefferson, in answer to one which inclosed some documents designed to prove that, though desirous of amending the constitution, he had favored its adoption, the President said: “I did not require the evidence of the extracts which you inclosed me, to convince me of your attachment to the constitution of the United States, or of your disposition to promote the general welfare of this country, but I regret, deeply regret, the difference of opinion which has arisen and divided you and another principal officer of the government, and wish devoutly there could be an accommodation of them by mutual yieldings.

“A measure of this sort would produce harmony and consequent good in our public councils, and the contrary will inevitably produce confusion and serious mischiefs—and for what? because mankind cannot think alike, but would adopt different means to attain the same end. For I will frankly and solemnly declare that I believe the views of both to be pure and well meant, and that experience only will decide with respect to the salubrity of the measures which are the subjects of this dispute.

“Why, then, when some of the best citizens of the United States, men of discernment, uniform and tried

patriots, who have no sinister views to promote, but are chaste in their ways of thinking and acting, are to be found, some on one side and some on the other, of the questions which have caused these agitations — why should either of you be so tenacious of your opinions as to make no allowance for those of the other?

“I could and, indeed, was about to add more on this interesting subject, but will forbear, at least for the present, after expressing a wish that the cup which has been presented to us may not be snatched from our lips by a discordance of action, when I am persuaded there is no discordance in your views. I have a great, a sincere esteem and regard for you both, and ardently wish that some line could be marked out by which both of you could walk.”

On the same subject Washington addressed a letter to Hamilton, from which the following is an extract:

“Differences in political opinions are as unavoidable as, to a certain point, they may be necessary; but it is exceedingly to be regretted that subjects cannot be discussed with temper, on the one hand, or decisions submitted to on the other, without improperly implicating the motives which led to them; and this regret borders on chagrin when we find that men of abilities, zealous patriots, having the same general objects in view, and the same upright intentions to prosecute them, will not exercise more charity in deciding on the opinions and actions of each other. When matters get to such lengths, the natural inference is that both sides have strained the cords beyond their bearing, that a middle course would be found the best, until experience shall have decided on the right way; or, which is not to be expected, because it is denied to mortals, until there shall be some infallible rule by which to forejudge events.



“ Having premised these things, I would fain hope that liberal allowances will be made for the political opinions of each other, and instead of those wounding suspicions and irritating charges, with which some of our gazettes are so strongly impregnated, and which cannot fail, if persevered in, of pushing matters to extremity, and thereby tearing the machine asunder, that there might be mutual forbearance and temporizing yieldings on all sides. Without these, I do not see how the reins of government are to be managed or how the union of the States can be much longer preserved.

“ How unfortunate would it be if a fabric so goodly, erected under so many providential circumstances, after acquiring in its first stages so much respectability, should, from diversity of sentiment, or internal obstructions to some of the acts of government (for I cannot prevail on myself to believe that these measures are as yet the acts of a determined party), be brought to the verge of dissolution! Melancholy thought! But while it shows the consequences of diversified opinions, where pushed with too much tenacity, it exhibits evidence also of the necessity of accommodation, and of the propriety of adopting such healing measures as may restore harmony to the discordant members of the Union, and the governing powers of it.

“ I do not mean to apply this advice to any measures which are passed or to any particular character. I have given it, in the same general terms, to other officers of the government. My earnest wish is that balm may be poured into all the wounds which have been given, to prevent them from gangrening, and to avoid those fatal consequences which the community may sustain if it is withheld. The friends of the Union must wish this; those

who are not, but who wish to see it ended, will be disappointed; and all things, I hope, will go well."

These earnest endeavors to soothe the angry passions and to conciliate the jarring discords of the cabinet were unsuccessful. The hostility which was so much and so sincerely lamented sustained no diminution, and its consequences became every day more diffusive.

Among the immediate effects of these internal dissensions was the encouragement they afforded to a daring and criminal resistance which was made to the execution of the laws imposing a duty on spirits distilled within the United States.

To the inhabitants of that part of Pennsylvania which lies west of the Alleghany mountains this duty was, from local considerations, peculiarly odious; nor was their hostility to the measure diminished by any affection for the source in which it originated. The constitution itself had encountered the most decided opposition from that part of the State, and that early enmity to the government, which exerted every faculty to prevent its adoption, had sustained no abatement. Its measures generally, and the whole system of finance particularly, had been reprobated with peculiar bitterness by many of the most popular men of that district. With these dispositions a tax law, the operation of which was extended to them, could not be favorably received, however generally it might be supported in other parts of the Union. But when, to this pre-existing temper, were superadded the motives which arose from perceiving that the measure was censured on the floor of Congress as unnecessary and tyrannical; that resistance to its execution was treated as probable; that a powerful and active party, pervading the Union, arraigned with extreme acrimony the whole system of finance as being antagonistic to liberty, and, with all the

passionate vehemence of conviction, charged its advocates with designing to subvert the republican institutions of America, we ought not to be surprised that the awful impressions, which usually restrain combinations to resist the laws, were lessened, and that the malcontents were emboldened to hope that those combinations might be successful.

The opposition to the duty on distilled spirits had been carried so far, and so daring had become the resistance to the law, as to require a proclamation from the President, warning all persons against unlawful combinations and proceedings tending to obstruct the operations of the laws. But such was the state of feeling that the proclamation produced no salutary effect.

Anxious to avoid extremities, the government resolved upon another course. Prosecutions were instituted against delinquents. The spirits distilled in the noncomplying counties were intercepted in their way to market and seized by the officers of the revenue, and the agents for the army were directed to purchase only those spirits on which the duty had been paid. Could the distillers have obeyed their wishes, these measures would have produced the desired effect. But, impelled by a furious multitude, they found it much more dangerous to obey the laws than to resist them.

Diplomatic intercourse had at length been opened with Great Britain, who had sent, on her own motion, Mr. George Hammond as minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. Mr. Hammond arrived at Philadelphia in the autumn of 1791, and soon after entered upon a long correspondence with the Secretary of State respecting the nonexecution of the treaty of peace. The British minister having intrusted to him only powers to negotiate, not to conclude, to make, not to adjust, complaints, the course

of the discussion, and the principles avowed by the respective parties, speedily demonstrated the slight probability which existed of their being able to agree upon a commercial treaty.

The Indians in the Northwest still maintaining their attitude of hostility preparations for prosecuting the war with vigor were earnestly pressed. General Wayne was appointed to succeed St. Clair in the command, but the inducements to enter the service were so small that the ranks filled up very slowly and the meditated expedition could not be undertaken prudently during the present year. Meanwhile, the clamor against the war continued to be loud and violent. From respect for opinions extensively professed it was thought advisable to make still another effort to procure peace by a direct communication of the views of the executive. The fate of those who were employed in these efforts was still more to be lamented than their failure. Colonel Harden and Major Truman, two brave officers and estimable men, were severally dispatched with propositions of peace, and each was murdered by the savages.

During the session of Congress Thomas Pinckney was nominated minister plenipotentiary to England, and Gouverneur Morris as minister plenipotentiary to France. Both these nominations were confirmed by the Senate. William Short was appointed minister resident at the Hague and was commissioned, with Mr. Carmichael, to effect a treaty with Spain. Paul Jones, during the summer, was appointed a commissioner for treating with the Dey of Algiers on the subject of peace and the ransoming of American captives. The letter informing of his appointment did not, however, reach him, for Jones died at Paris on the 18th of July, 1792, in abject poverty and destitution.

In May (1792), Washington wrote to the Earl of Buchan,

transmitting his portrait, painted by Mr. Robertson, which had been solicited by the earl. In the same letter he thanked the earl for a box made of the oak that sheltered William Wallace after the battle of Falkirk. In making this present the earl had requested Washington, in the event of his decease, to leave it to the man in his own country who should appear, in his judgment, to merit it best. Washington wisely decided otherwise, and, in his will, directed it to be returned to the Earl of Buchan.

On the 9th of May (1792), the day after the rising of Congress, Washington set out from Philadelphia for Mount Vernon, but returned early in June. In July he went again to Mount Vernon, accompanied by Mrs. Washington and her two little grandchildren, intending to remain there till near the meeting of Congress, which was to take place in November. During this short residence at his beloved home Washington had much to distract his attention from his favorite rural pursuits. He was in constant correspondence with the members of the cabinet and public affairs. To Hamilton he was writing about the resistance to the tax on spirituous liquors, on the dissension between him and Jefferson, and on politics; to General Knox, Secretary of War, on the preparations for Wayne's campaign against the Indians; to Jefferson, Secretary of State, on foreign affairs, on the troubles with the Spaniards in Florida, and on the Indian war, as well as on his quarrel with Hamilton, and to Randolph, Attorney-General, on the state of parties and the licentiousness of the press.

On the subject of newspaper abuse Washington appears to have felt a degree of sensitiveness which, at the present, is rare among public men. Hitherto he appears to have been personally free from this annoyance, but he was unwilling to see his administration calumniated by political demagogues.



Writing to Gouverneur Morris, the American minister in France (October 20, 1792), he says. "From the complexion of some of our newspapers foreigners would be led to believe that inveterate political dissensions exist among us, and that we are on the very verge of disunion, but the fact is otherwise. The great body of the people now feel the advantages of the general government, and would not, I am persuaded, do anything that should destroy it, but this kind of representations is an evil which must be placed in opposition to the infinite benefits resulting from a free press, and I am sure you need not be told that in this country a personal difference in political sentiments is often made to take the garb of general dissensions."

Besides the public business which pressed heavily on Washington during his present residence at Mount Vernon he found a new source of anxiety in the alarming illness of his nephew, George Augustine Washington, to whom the care of the estate had been intrusted since 1789, when the duties of the Presidency had called the chief to the seat of government. This gentleman had served in the Revolutionary War as aid to Lafayette, with the rank of major. Writing to Lafayette (June 10, 1792), Washington says: "I am afraid my nephew George, your old aid, will never have his health perfectly re-established. He has lately been attacked with the alarming symptom of spitting large quantities of blood, and the physicians give no hope of a restoration, unless it can be effected by a change of air and a total dereliction of business, to which he is too anxiously attentive. He will, if he should be taken from his family and friends, leave three fine children, two sons and a daughter. To the eldest of the boys he has given the name of Fayette, and a fine-looking child he is."

George Augustine Washington sunk rapidly after this



and died at the residence of Colonel Bassett, where he had gone for a change of air, on the 5th of February, 1793. Washington, on hearing of his decease, wrote immediately from Philadelphia, to his widow,\* condoling with her on the heavy loss, and inviting her to reside, with her children, at Mount Vernon.

In the latter part of October Washington returned to Philadelphia, in anticipation of the meeting of Congress.

On the 5th of November (1792), Congress again convened. In Washington's speech, delivered at the commencement of the session, Indian affairs were treated at considerable length, and the continuance of the war was mentioned as a subject of much regret. "The reiterated endeavors," it was said, "which had been made to effect a pacification had hitherto issued in new and outrageous proofs of persevering hostility on the part of the tribes with whom the United States were in contest.

"A detail of the measures that had been pursued and of their consequences, which would be laid before Congress, while it would confirm the want of success thus far, would evince that means, as proper and as efficacious as could have been devised, had been employed. The issue of some of them was still depending, but a favorable one, though not to be despaired of, was not promised by anything that had yet happened."

That a sanction, commonly respected even among savages, had been found insufficient to protect from massacre the emissaries of peace, was particularly noticed, and the families of those valuable citizens who had thus fallen victims to their zeal for the public service were recommended to the attention of the Legislature.

\* Mrs. Washington's maiden name was Frances Bassett. She was the daughter of Colonel Bassett, an intimate friend of Washington.

That unprovoked aggression had been made by the southern Indians, and that there was just cause for apprehension that the war would extend to them also, was mentioned as a subject of additional concern.

“Every practicable exertion had been made to be prepared for the alternative of prosecuting the war in the event of a failure of pacific overtures. A large proportion of the troops authorized to be raised had been recruited, though the numbers were yet incomplete, and pains had been taken to discipline them and put them in a condition for the particular kind of service to be performed. But a delay of operations, besides being dictated by the measures that were pursuing toward a pacific termination of the war, had been in itself deemed preferable to immature efforts.”

The humane system which has since been pursued with partial success, of gradually civilizing the savages by improving their condition, of diverting them in some degree from hunting to domestic and agricultural occupations, by imparting to them some of the most simple and useful acquisitions of society, and of conciliating them to the United States by a beneficial and well-regulated commerce, had ever been a favorite object with the President, and the detailed view which was not taken of Indian affairs was concluded with a repetition of his recommendations of these measures.

The subject next adverted to in the speech was the impediments which, in some places, continued to embarrass the collection of the duties on spirits distilled within the United States. After observing that these impediments were lessening in local extent, but that symptoms of such increased opposition had lately manifested themselves in certain places as, in his judgment, to render his special interposition advisable, the President added: “Congress may be assured that nothing within constitutional and legal

limits, which may depend on me, shall be wanting to assert and maintain the just authority of the laws. In fulfilling this trust I shall count entirely on the full co-operation of the other departments of government and upon the zealous support of all good citizens."

After noticing various objects which would require the attention of the Legislature, the President addressed himself particularly to the House of Representatives, and said: "I entertain a strong hope that the state of the national finances is now sufficiently matured to enable you to enter upon a systematic and effectual arrangement for the regular redemption and discharge of the public debt, according to the right which has been reserved to the government. No measure can be more desirable, whether viewed with an eye to its intrinsic importance, or to the general sentiments and wish of the nation."

The addresses of the two Houses in answer to the speech were, as usual, respectful and affectionate. The several subjects recommended to the attention of Congress, were noticed either in general terms, or in a manner to indicate a coincidence of sentiment between the legislative and executive departments. The turbulent spirit which had manifested itself in certain parts of the Union, was mentioned by both houses with a just degree of censure and the measures adopted by the President, as well as the resolution he expressed to compel obedience to the laws, were approved, and the House of Representatives, in the most unqualified terms, declared opinions in favor of systematic and effectual arrangements for discharging the public debt. But the subsequent proceedings of the Legislature did not fulfil the expectations excited by this auspicious commencement of the session.

At an early day in a committee of the whole House on the President's speech, Mr. Fitzsimmons moved "that

measures for the reduction of so much of the public debt as the United States have a right to redeem, ought to be adopted, and that the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to report a plan for that purpose."

This motion was objected to by Mr. Madison as being premature. The state of the finances, he thought, was not sufficiently understood to authorize the adoption of the measure it contemplated. The debate, however, soon took a different direction.

On a motion made, directing the Secretaries of the Treasury and of War to attend the House and to give information, severe denunciations were poured forth against the unconstitutionality of subjecting the representatives to the control of the heads of the executive departments. The motions for requiring a report from Hamilton on a plan for redeeming the public debt, and for paying a debt owing to the bank, which were brought in by Mr. Fitzsimmons, renewed the contest, but, although Madison and others opposed the reference to the Secretary of the Treasury, the resolution was carried.

Hamilton's report proposed a plan for the redemption of the debt. But the expenses of the Indian war rendering it unsafe, in his opinion, to rest absolutely on the existing revenue, he also proposed to extend the internal taxes to pleasure horses, or pleasure carriages, as might be deemed most advisable. For the reimbursement of the bank, he recommended that power be conferred to negotiate a loan for two million dollars — the dividends on the shares held by the government to be pledged for the interest, and, as the government paid six per cent. to the bank, he relied on the saving that would be effected by borrowing at a lower rate of interest. The consideration of this report was deferred on various grounds, and a motion was made to reduce the military establishment. The debate was long

and earnestly contested, but the motion was rejected on the 5th of January, 1793.

A few weeks later another subject was introduced into the House which absorbed the attention of the members and put an end, for the present session, to every measure connected with the finances.

Mr. Giles, on the 23d of January (1793), moved several resolutions, requiring information, among other things, on various points growing out of the loans authorized by Congress in August, 1790. The object was to inculcate the Secretary of the Treasury respecting the management and application of these loans, and of the revenue generally. Mr. Giles indulged himself in remarks which clearly showed the animus of his proceedings, and it was his determination to prove to the House that there was a large balance in the funds unaccounted for. The resolutions were agreed to without debate, as was only due to Mr. Hamilton, and soon after, three successive and able reports were sent in, containing the information required.

In these reports a full exposition was given of the views and motives of the secretary, in the conduct of the treasury department. It is also evident that Hamilton felt aggrieved at this attack upon his reputation, and he did not hesitate to use language of great plainness and severity, observing in conclusion: "Thus have I not only furnished a just and affirmative view of the real situation of the public accounts, but have likewise shown, I trust, in a conspicuous manner, fallacies enough in the statements, from which the inference of an unaccounted-for balance is drawn, to evince that it is one tissue of error."

But the matter did not end here. Mr. Giles, on the 28th of February (1793), submitted to the House a series of nine resolutions, containing charges against the secretary. The substance of them was, that he had failed to give Con-



gress information, in due time, of moneys drawn from Europe; that he had violated the law of the 4th of August, 1790, by an unauthorized application of money borrowed under it; that he had drawn part of the money into the United States, without any instructions from the President; that he had exceeded his authority in making loans, under the acts; that, without instructions from the President, he had drawn more of the money borrowed in Holland than he was authorized by those acts, and that he had been guilty of an indecorum to the House, in undertaking to judge its motives in calling for information. The debate was continued until the night of March 1st (1793), and was characterized by unusual bitterness. It terminated in a rejection of the resolutions and consequently in an entire exculpation of Hamilton from all just censure. The highest number voting in favor of any one of the resolutions was sixteen.

“The whole of the session was spent,” says Mr. Gibbs,\* “in sifting the conduct of the secretary. \* \* \* The investigation served one purpose of the opposition—it prevented any question being taken on the report. It seems somewhat anomalous, that a party which had charged the administration with a wish to perpetuate the debt, should thus have thwarted its measures to discharge it; and an explanation of the fact can only be found in a fixed determination to break down the secretary.”

The other business of the session may be briefly stated. The claim for compensation for loss on the certificates in which they had been paid, advanced by the officers of the old Continental army, was rejected. An act respecting “fugitives from justice, and persons escaping from the service of their masters,” was passed, early in February,

\* “Administrations of Washington and Adams,”



by a vote of forty-eight to seven. The trade with the Indians was regulated, and an attempt was made to initiate an amendment to the constitution, because the State of Georgia, sued in the Federal courts for a debt due to a citizen of another State, had suffered judgment by default. And nearly two millions of dollars were appropriated to the public service, in addition to the almost three millions more for interest on the debt.

On Saturday, the 3d of March (1793), a constitutional period was put to the existence of the present Congress. The members separated with obvious symptoms of extreme irritation. "Various causes," says Marshall, "the most prominent of which have already been noticed, had combined to organize *two distinct parties* in the United States, which were rapidly taking the form of a ministerial and an opposition party. By that in opposition, the President was not yet openly denounced. His personal influence was too great to be encountered by a direct avowal that he was at the head of their adversaries, and his public conduct did not admit of a suspicion that he could allow himself to rank as the chief of a party. Nor could public opinion be seduced to implicate him in the ambitious plans and dark schemes for the subversion of liberty, which were ascribed to a part of the administration, and to the leading members who had supported the measures of finance adopted by the Legislature."

Yet it was becoming apparent that things were taking a course which must inevitably involve him in the political conflicts which were about to take place. It was apparent that the charges against the Secretary of the Treasury would not be relinquished, and that they were of a nature to affect the chief magistrate materially, should his countenance not be withdrawn from that officer. It was equally apparent that the fervor of democracy, which was perpetu-

ally manifesting itself in the papers, in invectives against levees, against the trappings of royalty, and against the marks of peculiar respect which were paid to the President, must soon include him more pointedly in its strictures.

These divisions, which are inherent in the nature of popular governments, by which the chief magistrate, however unexceptionable his conduct, and however exalted his character, must, sooner or later, be more or less affected, were beginning to be essentially influenced by the great events of Europe.

That revolution which has been the admiration, the wonder, and the terror of the civilized world, had, from its commencement, been viewed in America with the deepest interest. In its first stage, but one sentiment respecting it prevailed, and that was a belief, accompanied with an ardent wish, that it would improve the condition of France, extend the blessings of liberty, and promote the happiness of the human race. When the labors of the convention had terminated in a written constitution, this unanimity of opinion was in some degree impaired. By a few who had thought deeply on the science of government, and who, if not more intelligent, certainly judge more dispassionately than their fellow-citizens, that instrument was believed to contain the principles of self-destruction. It was feared that a system so ill balanced could not be permanent. A deep impression was made on the same persons by the influence of the galleries over the Legislature, and of mobs over the executive; by the tumultuous assemblages of the people, and their licentious excesses during the short and sickly existence of the regal authority. These did not appear to be the symptoms of a healthy constitution or of genuine freedom. Persuaded that the present state of things could not last, they doubted and they feared for the future.

In total opposition to this sentiment was that of the public generally. There seems to be something infectious in the example of a powerful and enlightened nation verging toward democracy, which impose on the human mind, and leads human reason in fetters. Novelties, introduced by such a nation, are stripped of the objections which had been preconceived against them, and long-settled opinions yield to the overwhelming weight of such dazzling authority. It wears the semblance of being the sense of mankind, breaking loose from the shackles which had been imposed by artifice, and asserting the freedom and the dignity of his nature.

The constitution of France, therefore, was generally received with unqualified plaudits. The establishment of a legislature consisting of a single body was defended not only as being adapted to the particular situation of that country, but as being right in itself. Certain anonymous writers, who supported the theory of a balanced government, were branded as the advocates of royalty and of aristocracy. To question the duration of the present order of things was thought to evidence an attachment to unlimited monarchy, or a blind prejudice in favor of the institutions of Great Britain, and the partiality of America in favor of a senate was visibly declining.

In this stage of the revolution, however, the division of sentiment was not marked with sufficient distinctness, nor the passions of the people agitated with sufficient violence, for any powerful effect to be produced on the two parties in America. But when the monarchy was completely overthrown and a republic decreed,\* the people of the United

\*This event was announced to the President by the minister plenipotentiary of France, at Philadelphia, in February, 1793. Through the Secretary of State an answer was returned, of which the following is an extract:

States seemed electrified by the measure, and its influence was felt by the whole society. The war in which the several potentates of Europe were engaged against France, although in almost every instance declared by that power, was pronounced to be a war for the extirpation of human liberty and for the banishment of free government from the face of the earth. The preservation of the constitution of the United States was supposed to depend on its issue, and the coalition against France was treated as a coalition against America also.

A cordial wish for the success of the French arms, or rather that the war might terminate without any diminution of French power, and in such a manner as to leave the people of that country free to choose their own form of government, was perhaps universal, but, respecting the probable issue of their internal conflicts, perfect unanimity of opinion did not prevail. By some few individuals, the practicability of governing by a system formed on the republican model, an immense, populous, and military nation, whose institutions, habits, and morals were adapted to monarchy, and which was surrounded by armed neigh-

“The President receives with great satisfaction this attention of the executive council, and the desire they have manifested of making known to us the resolution entered into by the National Convention, even before a definitive regulation of their new establishment could take place. Be assured, sir, that the government and the citizens of the United States view with the most sincere pleasure every advance of your nation towards its happiness, an object essentially connected with its liberty; and they consider the union of principles and pursuits between our two countries as a link which binds still closer their interests and affections.

“We earnestly wish, on our part, that these our mutual dispositions may be improved to mutual good, by establishing our commercial intercourse on principles as friendly to natural right and freedom as are those of our governments.”

bors, was deemed a problem which time alone could solve. The circumstances under which the abolition of royalty was declared, the massacres which preceded it, the scenes of turbulence and violence which were acted in every part of the nation, appeared to them to present an awful and doubtful state of things, respecting which no certain calculations could be made, and the idea that a republic was to be introduced and supported by force, was, to them, a paradox in politics. Under the influence of these appearances the apprehension was entertained that, if the ancient monarchy should not be restored a military despotism would be established. By the many, these unpopular doubts were deemed unpardonable heresies, and the few to whom they were imputed, were pronounced hostile to liberty. A suspicion that the unsettled state of things in France had contributed to suspend the payment of the debt to that nation had added to the asperity with which the resolutions on that subject were supported, and the French revolution will be found to have had great influence on the strength of parties and on the subsequent political transactions of the United States.

## CHAPTER VI.

### WASHINGTON INAUGURATES THE SYSTEM OF NEUTRALITY.

1793.

AS the time approached for the expiration of Washington's first term of office as President of the United States, a great deal of anxiety was felt lest he should determine on a final retirement from public life. It was well known that he had originally accepted the office with extreme reluctance, that his attention to its duties had impaired his health, and that he was very desirous to pass the remainder of his life in retirement and repose. But at the same time it was felt that a crisis in public affairs was impending which imperatively demanded the whole force of his character and the whole influence of his popularity to sustain the government. Even at the period when the Federal government was first inaugurated, the call of his country to give it strength and permanence was not more urgent than that which now summoned him to save it from the rage of party spirit. Troubles and difficulties were also threatening the country from abroad as well as internal factions at home, and the true friends of the country felt that none but Washington was equal to the emergency. He received many letters urging his continuance in office. Three of these were from members of the cabinet—Jefferson, Hamilton, and Randolph.

Jefferson expressed himself as follows:

“When you first mentioned to me your purpose of retiring from the government, though I felt all the magni-

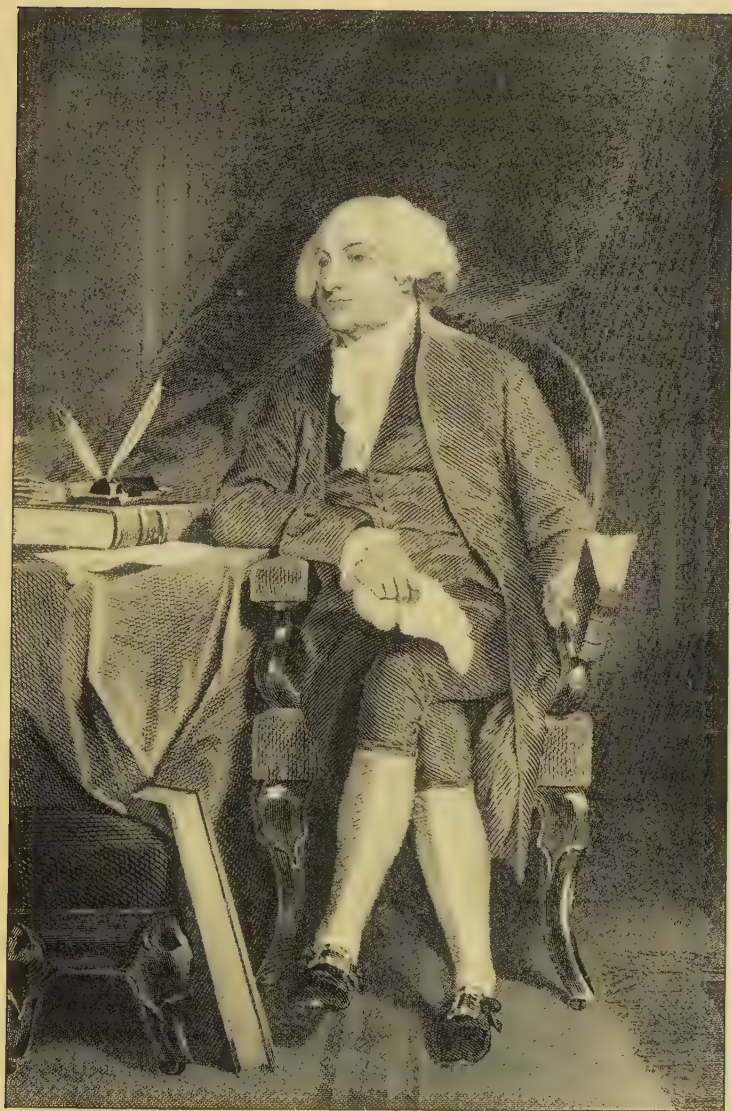
(1775)



tude of the event, I was in a considerable degree silent. I knew that to such a mind as yours persuasion was idle and impertinent; that, before forming your decision, you had weighed all the reasons for and against the measure, had made up your mind on full view of them, and that there could be little hope of changing the result. Pursuing my reflections, too, I knew we were some day to try to walk alone, and if the essay should be made while you should be alive and looking on, we should derive confidence from that circumstance and resource if it failed. The public mind, too, was then calm and confident, and therefore in a favorable state for making the experiment. Had no change of circumstances supervened, I should not, with any hope of success, have now ventured to propose to you a change of purpose. But the public mind is no longer so confident and serene, and that from causes in which you are noways personally mixed.

“The confidence of the whole Union is centered in you. Your being at the helm will be more than an answer to every argument which can be used to alarm and lead the people in any quarter into violence or secession. North and South will hang together, if they have you to hang on; and if the first corrective of a numerous representation should fail in its effect, your presence will give time for trying others not inconsistent with the union and peace of the States.

“I am perfectly aware of the oppression under which your present office lays your mind, and of the ardor with which you pant for retirement to domestic life. But there is sometimes an eminence of character on which society have such peculiar claims, as to control the predilection of the individual for a particular walk of happiness and restrain him to that alone arising from the present and future benedictions of mankind. This seems to be your condition,



*JOHN ADAMS.*



and the law imposed on you by Providence in forming your character and fashioning the events on which it was to operate, and it is to motives like these and not to personal anxieties of mine or others, who have no right to call on you for sacrifices, that I appeal from your former determination, and urge a revisal of it, on the ground of change in the aspect of things. Should an honest majority result from the new and enlarged representation, should those acquiesce, whose principles or interests they may control, your wishes for retirement would be gratified with less danger, as soon as that shall be manifest, without awaiting the completion of the second period of four years. One or two sessions will determine the crisis, and I cannot but hope that you can resolve to add one or two more to the many years you have already sacrificed to the good of mankind.

“The fear of suspicion that any selfish motive of continuance in office may enter into this solicitation on my part obliges me to declare that no such motive exists. It is a thing of mere indifference to the public whether I retain or relinquish my purpose of closing my tour with the first periodical renovation of the government. I know my own measure too well to suppose that my services contribute anything to the public confidence or the public utility. Multitudes can fill the office in which you have been pleased to place me, as much to their advantage and satisfaction. I, therefore, have no motive to consult but my own inclination, which is bent irresistibly on the tranquil enjoyment of my family, my farm, and my books. I should repose among them, it is true, in far greater security, if I were to know that you remained at the watch, and I hope it will be so. To the inducements urged from a view of our domestic affairs I will add a bare mention of what indeed need only be mentioned, that weighty motives for

your continuance are to be found in our foreign affairs. I think it probable that both the Spanish and English negotiations, if not completed before your purpose is known, will be suspended from the moment it is known, and that the latter nation will then use double dilligence in fomenting the Indian war.

“With my wishes for the future I shall, at the same time, express my gratitude of the past, at least my portion of it, and beg permission to follow you, whether in public or private life, with those sentiments of sincere attachment and respect with which I am unalterably, dear sir, your affectionate friend and humble servant.”

Extract from Hamilton's letter:

“I received the most sincere pleasure at finding, in our last conversation, that there was some relaxation in the disposition you had before discovered to decline a re-election. Since your departure I have lost no opportunity of sounding the opinions of persons whose opinions were worth knowing on these two points: First, the effect of your declining upon the public affairs, and upon your own reputation; secondly, the effect of your continuing in reference to the declarations you have made of your disinclination to public life. And I can truly say that I have not found the least difference of sentiment on either point. The impression is uniform, that your declining would be to be deplored as the greatest evil that could befall the country at the present juncture, and as critically hazardous to your own reputation; that your continuance will be justified in the mind of every friend to his country by the evident necessity for it.

“It is clear, says everyone with whom I have conversed, that the affairs of the national government are not yet firmly established; that its enemies, generally speaking, are as inveterate as ever; that their enmity has been sharpened



by its success, and by all the resentments which flow from disappointed predictions and mortified vanity; that a general and strenuous effort is making in every State to place the administration of it in the hands of its enemies, as if they were its safest guardians; that the period of the next House of Representatives is likely to prove the crisis of its permanent character; that, if you continue in office, nothing materially mischievous is to be apprehended, if you quit much is to be dreaded; that the same motives which induced you to accept originally ought to decide you to continue till matters have assumed a more determinate aspect; that indeed it would have been better, as it regards your own character, that you had never consented to come forward than now to leave the business unfinished and in danger of being undone; that, in the event of storms arising, there would be an imputation either of want of foresight or want of firmness, and, in fine, that on public and personal accounts, on patriotic and prudential considerations, the clear path to be pursued by you will be again to obey the voice of your country, which it is not doubted will be as earnest and as unanimous as ever.

“I trust, sir, and I pray God, that you will determine to make a further sacrifice of your tranquillity and happiness to the public good. I trust that it need not continue above a year or two more. And I think that it will be more eligible to retire from office before the expiration of the term of election than to decline a re-election.

“The sentiments I have delivered upon this occasion I can truly say proceed exclusively from an anxious concern for the public welfare and an affectionate personal attachment. These dispositions must continue to govern, in every vicissitude, one who has the honor to be very truly and respectfully, sir, yours, etc.”



Randolph wrote as follows:

“I have persuaded myself that this letter, though unconnected with any official relation, and upon a subject to the decision of which you alone are competent, will be received in the spirit with which it is written. The Union, for the sake of which I have encountered various embarrassments, not wholly unknown to you, and sacrificed some opinions, which, but for its jeopardy, I should never have surrendered, seems to me to be, now, at the eve of a crisis. It is feared by those who take a serious interest in the affairs of the United States that you will refuse the chair of government at the approaching election. If such an event must happen indulge me, at least, in the liberty of opening to you a course of thought, which a calm attention to the Federal government has suggested, and no bias of party has influenced.

“It cannot have escaped you that divisions are formed in our politics as systematic as those which prevail in Great Britain. Such as opposed the constitution, from a hatred to the Union, can never be conciliated by any overture or atonement. By others it is meditated to push the construction of Federal powers to every tenable extreme. A third class, republican in principle, and, thus far, in my judgment, happy in their discernment of our welfare, have, notwithstanding, mingled with their doctrines a fatal error—that the State assemblies are to be resorted to as the engines of correction to the Federal administration. The honors belonging to the chief magistracy are objects of no common solicitude to a few, who compose a fourth denomination.

“The fuel which has been already gathered for combustion wants no addition. But how awfully might it be increased were the violence, which is now suspended by a universal submission to your pretensions, let loose by your

resignation! Permit me, then, in the fervor of a dutiful and affectionate attachment to you, to beseech you to penetrate the consequences of a dereliction of the reins. The constitution would never have been adopted, but from a knowledge that you had once sanctioned it, and an expectation that you would execute it. It is in a state of probation. The most inauspicious struggles are past, but the public deliberations need stability. You alone can give them stability. You suffered yourself to yield when the voice of your country summoned you to the administration. Should a civil war arise you cannot stay at home. And now much easier will it be to disperse the factions which are rushing to this catastrophe than to subdue them after they shall appear in arms? It is the fixed opinion of the world that you surrender nothing incomplete.

"I am not unapprised of many disagreeable sensations which have labored in your breast. But, let them spring from any cause whatsoever, of one thing I think I am sure (and I speak this from a satisfactory inquiry lately made), that, if a second opportunity shall be given to the people of showing their gratitude, they will not be less unanimous than before."

Washington's own views we learn from the following letter in answer to Randolph:

"The purpose of this letter is merely to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of the 5th and 13th instant, and to thank you for the information contained in both, without entering into the details of either.

"With respect, however, to the interesting subject treated in that of the 5th, I can express but one sentiment at this time, and that is a wish, a devout one, that, whatever my ultimate determination shall be, it may be for the best. The subject never recurs to my mind but with additional poignancy, and, from the declining state of the health of

my nephew, to whom my concerns of a domestic and private nature are intrusted, it comes with aggravated force. But as the all-wise Disposer of events has hitherto watched over my steps, I trust that, in the important one I may soon be called upon to take, He will mark the course so plainly as that I cannot mistake the way. In full hope of this I will take no measures for the present that will not leave me at liberty to decide from circumstances and the best lights I can obtain on the subject.

“I shall be happy, in the meantime, to see a cessation of the abuses of public officers and of almost every measure of government with which some of the gazettes are so strongly impregnated, and which cannot fail, if persevered in with the malignancy with which they now teem, of rendering the Union asunder. The seeds of discontent, distrust, and irritation which are so plentifully sown, can scarcely fail to produce this effect, and to mar that prospect of happiness which, perhaps, never beamed with more effulgence upon any people under the sun, and this too at a time when all Europe is gazing with admiration at the brightness of our prospects. And for what is all this? Among other things, to afford nuts for our transatlantic — (what shall I call them?) — foes.

“In a word, if government and the officers of it are to be the constant theme for newspaper abuse, and this too without condescending to investigate the motives or the facts, it will be impossible, I conceive, for any man living to manage the helm or to keep the machine together. But I am running from my text, and therefore will only add assurances of the affectionate esteem and regard with which I am, etc.”

To the remonstrances of his immediate advisers in the Cabinet were added many more of the same tenor from other friends and correspondents. He had, in fact, already

determined to retire at this time, and had accordingly prepared a farewell address to the people for the occasion. But he had never publicly declared this intention, and, urged thus strongly by leading men of all parties, he finally consented to remain in office.

“Respecting the person who should fill the office of Vice-President,” says Marshall, “the public was divided. The profound statesman who had been called to the duties of that station had drawn upon himself a great degree of obloquy by some political tracts, in which he had labored to maintain the proposition that a balance in government was essential to the preservation of liberty. In these disquisitions he was supposed by his opponents to have discovered sentiments in favor of distinct orders in society, and, although he had spoken highly of the constitution of the United States, it was imagined that his balance could be maintained only by hereditary classes. He was also understood to be friendly to the system of finance which had been adopted, and was believed to be among the few who questioned the durability of the French republic. His great services and acknowledged virtues were therefore disregarded, and a competitor was sought for among those who had distinguished themselves in the opposition. The choice was directed from Mr. Jefferson by a constitutional restriction on the power of the electors, which would necessarily deprive him of the vote to be given by Virginia. It being necessary to designate some other opponent to Mr. Adams, George Clinton, the Governor of New York, was selected for this purpose.

“Throughout the war of the Revolution, this gentleman had filled the office of chief magistrate of his native State, and, under circumstances of real difficulty, had discharged its duties with a courage and an energy which secured the esteem of the Commander-in-Chief and gave him a fair

claim to the favor of his country. Embracing afterward with ardor the system of State supremacy, he had contributed greatly to the rejection of the resolutions for investing Congress with the power of collecting an impost on imported goods, and had been conspicuous for his determined hostility to the constitution of the United States. His sentiments respecting the measures of the government were known to concur with those of the minority in Congress."

Both parties seemed confident in their strength, and both made the utmost exertions to insure success. On opening the ballots in the Senate chamber (Feb. 13, 1793), it appeared that the unanimous suffrage of his country had been once more conferred on General Washington, and that Mr. Adams had received a plurality of the votes.\*

The ceremonial to be observed at the inauguration was the subject of a difference of opinion, and a Cabinet council was called to take the matter into consideration. Jefferson and Hamilton thought that the oath ought to be administered in private, and that one of the judges of the Supreme Court should attend to this duty at the President's own house. Knox and Randolph were of a different opinion and decided that the ceremony should take place in public. Washington coincided with them in their views, and it was finally decided at a subsequent Cabinet meeting, on the 1st of March, that the inauguration should take place in the Senate chamber.

Among the senators who were present on this occasion were John Langdon of New Hampshire, one of the purest and most disinterested of the Revolutionary veterans; Oliver Ellsworth, from Connecticut, after-

\* The precise return was: For President — George Washington, 132. For Vice-President — John Adams, 77; George Clinton, 50; Thomas Jefferson, 4; Aaron Burr, 1.

ward chief justice of the United States; Roger Sherman, also from Connecticut, one of the committee for preparing the Declaration of Independence; Rufus King, the eloquent statesman from New York; Robert Morris, the great financier, from Pennsylvania, and James Monroe, afterward President of the United States, from Virginia.

The proceedings, as recorded in Mr. Benton's "Abridgment of the Debates of Congress," were as follows:

"Agreeably to notice given by the President of the United States on the second instant, he came to the Senate chamber and took his seat in the chair usually assigned to the president of the Senate, who, on this occasion was seated at the right, and in advance of the President of the United States; a seat on the left, and also in advance, being provided for Judge Cushing, appointed to administer the oath. The doors of the Senate chamber being open, the heads of the departments, foreign ministers, the late speaker, and such members of the late House of Representatives as were in town, together with as many other spectators as could be accommodated, were present.

"After a short pause the president of the Senate arose and addressed the President of the United States as follows:

"'Sir:— One of the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States is now present and ready to administer to you the oath required by the constitution to be taken by the President of the United States.'

"On which the President of the United States, rising from his seat, was pleased to address the audience as follows:

"'FELLOW-CITIZENS:— I am again called upon, by the voice of my country, to execute the functions of its chief magistrate. When the occasion proper for it shall arrive, I shall endeavor to express the high sense I entertain of



this distinguished honor, and of the confidence which has been reposed in me by the people of United America.

“ ‘ Previous to the execution of any official act of the President, the constitution requires an oath of office. This oath I am now about to take, and in your presence; that, if it shall be found during my administration of the government, I have, in any instance, violated, willingly, or knowingly, the injunction thereof, I may (besides incurring constitutional punishment) be subject to the upbraidings of all who are now witnesses of the present solemn ceremony.’ ”

Judge Cushing then administered the oath of office required by the constitution, after which the President of the United States retired, and the spectators dispersed.”

The record of the proceedings thus given by Mr. Benton gives but a very imperfect idea of the actual scene. Fortunately, an eye-witness, Arthur J. Stansbury, for twenty-five years a reporter of Congress, has given us a very lively and graphic description of the scene in his “*Recollections and Anecdotes of the Presidents of the United States.*” \* We copy his description in full:

“ But I once had,” says Mr. Stansbury, “ an opportunity far more favorable of beholding this greatest of men, under circumstances the best possible for exhibiting him to the fullest advantage. It was a privilege which could happen but once to any man, and I esteem the hour when I enjoyed it as one of the brightest moments I was ever permitted to know. Its remembrance yet glows vividly on my mind; years have not dimmed it; the whole scene is yet before me; and I need not say with what force repeated public occasions of a like kind have since recalled it to remembrance. Yes, it was my favored lot to see and hear President Washington address the Congress of the United

\* Published in Arthur’s “*Home Gazette.*”

States, when elected for the last time. Of men now living, how few can say the same!

“I was but a schoolboy at the time, and had followed one of the many groups of people who, from all quarters, were making their way to the hall in Chestnut street, at the corner of Fifth, where the two Houses of Congress then held their sittings, and where they were that day to be addressed by the President, on the opening of his second term of office. Boys can often manage to work their way through a crowd better than men can; at all events, it so happened that I succeeded in reaching the steps of the hall, from which elevation, looking in every direction, I could see nothing but human heads — a vast fluctuating sea, swaying to and fro, and filling every accessible place which commanded even a distant view of the building. They had congregated, not with the hope of getting into the hall, for that was physically impossible, but that they might see Washington. Many an anxious look was cast in the direction from which he was expected to come, till at length, true to the appointed hour (he was the most punctual of men), an agitation was observable on the outskirts of the crowd, which gradually opened and gave space for the approach of an elegant white coach, drawn by six superb white horses, having on its four sides beautiful designs of the four seasons, painted by Cipriani. It slowly made its way till it drew up immediately in front of the hall. The rush was now tremendous. But as the coach door opened, there issued from it two gentlemen, with long white wands, who, with some difficulty, parted the people, so as to open a passage from the carriage to the steps, on which the fortunate schoolboy had achieved a footing, and whence the whole proceeding could be distinctly seen. As the person of the President emerged from the carriage, a universal shout rent the air, and continued,

as he very deliberately mounted the steps. On reaching the platform, he paused, looking back on the carriage, thus affording to the anxiety of the people the indulgence they desired, of feasting their eyes upon his person. Never did a more majestic personage present himself to the public gaze. He was within two feet of me; I could have touched his clothes; but I should as soon have thought of touching an electric battery. Boy as I was, I felt as in the presence of a Divinity. As he turned to enter the hall, the gentlemen with the white wands preceded him, and, with still greater difficulty than before, repressed the people, and cleared a way to the great staircase. As he ascended, I ascended with him, step by step, creeping close to the wall, and almost hidden by the skirts of his coat. Nobody looked at me; everybody was looking at him; and thus I was permitted, unnoticed, to glide along, and, happily, to make my way (where so many were vainly longing and struggling to enter) into the lobby of the chamber of the House of Representatives. Once in, I was safe; for had I even been seen by the officers in attendance, it would have been impossible to get me out again. I saw near me a large pyramidal stove, which, fortunately, had but little fire in it, and on which I forthwith clambered, until I had attained a secure perch, from which every part of the hall could be deliberately and distinctly surveyed. Depend upon it, I made use of my eyes.

“On either side of the broad aisle that was left vacant in the center were assembled the two houses of Congress. As the President entered, all rose, and remained standing till he had ascended the steps at the upper end of the chamber and taken his seat in the speaker’s chair. It was an impressive moment. Notwithstanding that the spacious apartment, floor, lobby, galleries, and all approaches were crowded to their utmost capacity, not a

sound was heard; the silence of expectation was unbroken and profound; every breath seemed suspended. He was dressed in a full suit of the richest black velvet; his lower limbs in short clothes with diamond knee buckles and black silk stockings. His shoes, which were brightly japanned, were surmounted with large square silver buckles. His hair, carefully displayed in the manner of the day, was richly powdered, and gathered behind into a black silk bag, on which was a bow of black ribbon. In his hand he carried a plain cocked hat, decorated with the American cockade. He wore by his side a light, slender dress-sword, in a green shagreen scabbard, with a richly ornamented hilt. His gait was deliberate, his manner solemn but self-possessed, and he presented, altogether, the most august human figure I had then or have since beheld.

“At the head of the Senate stood Thomas Jefferson, in a blue coat, single breasted, with large bright basket-buttons, his vest and small-clothes of crimson. I remember being struck with his animated countenance, of a brick-red hue, his bright eye and foxy hair, as well as by his tall, gaunt, ungainly form and square shoulders. A perfect contrast was presented by the pale reflective face and delicate figure of James Madison, and above all, by the short, burly, bustling form of General Knox, with ruddy cheek, prominent eye, and still more prominent proportions of another kind. In the semicircle which was formed behind the chair, and on either hand of the President, my boyish gaze was attracted by the splendid attire of the Chevalier d’Yrujo, the Spanish ambassador, then the only foreign minister near our infant government. His glittering star, his silk chapeau bras, edged with ostrich feathers, his foreign air and courtly bearing, contrasted strongly with those nobility of nature’s forming who stood around him. It was a very fair representation

of the old world and the new. How often has the same reflection occurred to me since, on witnessing the glittering and now numerous company of foreign dignitaries collected round our President by an inauguration day, or the recurrence of our national anniversary! True, the individuals who form that brilliant coterie are, for the most part, men eminent for general intelligence, as well as the virtues of private life — men who meet, and well deserve, a cordial welcome on our shores and often carry from it the sincerest regret. But how do the personal sentiments and characters of the men themselves put out the blaze of the gold and diamonds with which their governments had covered them! And if, even in the unadorned presence of his successors, these decorations seem puerile in Republican eyes, how would they have faded away and been lost in the chilling grandeur of the public presence of Washington!

“Having retained his seat for a few moments, while the members resumed their seats, the President rose, and, taking from his breast a roll of manuscript, proceeded to read his address. His voice was full and sonorous, deep and rich in its tones, free from that trumpet ring which it could assume amid the tumult of battle (and which is said to have been distinctly heard above all its roar), but sufficiently loud and clear to fill the chamber, and be heard, with perfect ease, in its most remote recesses. The address was of considerable length; its topics, of course, I forget, for I was too young to understand them; I only remember, in its latter part, some reference to the Wabash river (then a new name to my ear), and to claims or disputes on the part of the Indian tribes. He read, as he did everything else, with a singular serenity and composure, with manly ease and dignity, but without the smallest attempt at display.

“Having concluded, he laid the manuscript upon the

table before him and resumed his seat, when, after a slight pause, he rose and withdrew, the members rising and remaining on their feet until he left the chamber.

"The paper was then taken up by Mr. Beckley, the clerk of the House, and again read from beginning to end. Beckley's enunciation, by the by, was admirably clear, giving every syllable of every word, and I may say, he was almost the only officer, whose official duty it is to read, whom I ever heard read well.

"This form having been gone through, the members of the Senate retired and I took advantage of the bustle to descend from my unwonted and presumptuous elevation, and mingle with the dissolving crowd."

These recollections of Mr. Stansbury present a much livelier view of the transactions of that memorable day, than that which any reader's imagination can supply by the aid of the official record.

Washington was now once more plunged into the troubled ocean of public affairs. Before following him into new scenes of self-sacrifice and disinterestedness in the service of his country, we pause to notice a pleasing act of private friendship, which, with his usual delicacy, he calls an act of simple justice. In consequence of the active part which he had taken in the French revolution, Washington's bosom friend, Lafayette, had become a prisoner to the King of Prussia, and was detained in captivity. The Marchioness Lafayette, after being a prisoner in Paris, had been suffered to retire to her husband's estate, and reside there under the safeguard of the municipality, without permission to correspond with her friends. Ignorant of her actual residence, but supposing that she might be suffering for want of ready money, Washington sent her a considerable sum, and wrote as follows:

"MADAM: — If I had words that could convey to you an



adequate idea of my feelings on the present situation of the Marquis de Lafayette, this letter would appear to you in a different garb. The sole object in writing to you now is, to inform you that I have deposited in the hands of Mr. Nicholas Van Staphorst, of Amsterdam, two thousand three hundred and ten guilders, Holland currency, equal to two hundred guineas, subject to your orders.

“This sum is, I am certain, the least I am indebted for services rendered to me by the Marquis de Lafayette, of which I never yet have received the account. I could add much, but it is best, perhaps, that I should say little on this subject. Your goodness will supply any deficiency.

“The uncertainty of your situation, after all the inquiries I have made, has occasioned a delay in this address and remittance, and even now, the measure adopted is more the effect of a desire to find where you are, than from any knowledge I have obtained of your residence.

“At all times, and under all circumstances, you and yours will possess the affectionate regards of him who has the honor to be, &c.”

Shortly after writing this letter Washington received one from the marchioness, and still later another, both written before the above letter reached her. She requested Washington's interference with the Prussian government on behalf of Lafayette, and was desirous, if he could be released, that he and his family should reside in the United States. Everything was done that could be done, by Washington and the American ministers in Europe, to obtain Lafayette's release, but it was not effected till several years after, and then through other means.

During the recess of Congress, Washington twice visited Mount Vernon, once for a few days in April (1793), and again, for two or three weeks in June and July. On the 4th of July he was present at the celebration of the national

anniversary by the citizens of Alexandria. He was prevented from spending more time at Mount Vernon by the pressure of public business, which was now assuming a new and very unpleasant aspect.

During Washington's short visit to Mount Vernon in April, he received a letter from Jefferson, dated April 7th, (1793), informing him that France had declared war against England and Holland. Instantly perceiving the danger of the United States becoming involved in the hostilities of these nations, Washington, on the 12th of April, wrote in reply to Jefferson: "War having actually commenced between France and Great Britain, it behooves the government of this country to use every means in its power to prevent the citizens thereof from embroiling us with either of those powers, by endeavoring to maintain a strict neutrality. I therefore require that you will give the subject mature consideration, that such measures as shall be deemed most likely to effect this desirable purpose may be adopted without delay, for I have understood that vessels are already designated as privateers, and are preparing accordingly. Such other measures as may be necessary for us to pursue against events, which it may not be in our power to avoid or control, you will also think of, and lay them before me on my arrival in Philadelphia; for which place I shall set out to-morrow, but will leave it to the advices which I may receive to-night by the post, to determine whether it is to be by the direct route or by the one I proposed to come, that is, by Reading, &c."

The tenor of this letter shows that Washington was fully aware of the importance of the emergency in our foreign relations which had now arisen, and the result showed that, as usual, he was fully equal to the occasion. The difficulty of the position arose from the fact already adverted to — that of the two great political parties then existing, one

was in favor of direct aid to the French revolutionists, while the other, desirous to remain neutral while the European contest was going on, was charged by its opponents with partiality to England. It remained for Washington, by that decision of character and inflexible firmness for which he was so remarkable, to inaugurate that system of neutrality and noninterference in the affairs of Europe, which has ever since constituted the foreign policy of this country.

On his return to Philadelphia, Washington summoned a meeting of the Cabinet, at the same time sending to each member a series of questions to be considered as preparatory to the meeting. These questions, thirteen in number, all referred to the measures to be taken by the President in consequence of the revolution which had overthrown the French monarchy; of the new organization of a republic in that country; of the appointment of a minister from that republic to the United States, and of the war declared by the National Convention of France against Great Britain. The first of these questions, says Mr. Adams,\* was, whether a proclamation should issue to prevent interferences of our citizens in the war, and whether the proclamation should or should not contain a declaration of neutrality. The second was, whether a minister from the republic of France should be received. Upon these two questions the opinion of the Cabinet was unanimous in the affirmative—that a proclamation of neutrality should issue, and that the minister from the French republic should be received. But upon all the other questions, the opinions of the four heads of the departments were equally divided. They were indeed questions of difficulty and delicacy equal to their

\* John Quincy Adams on Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality.

importance. No less than whether, after a revolution in France annihilating the government with which the treaties of alliance and of commerce had been contracted, the treaties themselves were to be considered binding as between the nations, and particularly whether the stipulation of guarantee to France of her possessions in the West Indies, was binding upon the United States to the extent of imposing upon them the obligation of taking side with France in the war. As the members of the Cabinet disagreed in their opinions upon these questions, and as there was no immediate necessity for deciding them, the further consideration of them was postponed, and they were never afterwards resumed. While these discussions of the Cabinet of Washington were held, the minister plenipotentiary from the French republic arrived in this country. He had been appointed by the National Convention of France, which had dethroned, tried, sentenced to death, and executed Louis the Sixteenth, abolished the monarchy, and proclaimed a republic one and indivisible, under the auspices of liberty, equality, and fraternity, as thenceforth the government of France. By all the rest of Europe they were then considered as revolted subjects in rebellion against their sovereign, and were not recognized as constituting an independent government.

Hamilton and Knox were of opinion that the minister from France should be conditionally received, with the reservation of the question whether the United States were still bound to fulfil the stipulations of the treaties. They inclined to the opinion that treaties themselves were annulled by the revolution of the government in France — an opinion to which the example of the revolutionary government had given plausibility by declaring some of the treaties made by the abolished monarchy no longer binding upon the nation. Mr. Hamilton thought, also, that

France had no just claim to the fulfilment of the stipulation of guarantee, because that stipulation, and the whole treaty of alliance in which it was contained, were professedly, and on the face of them, only defensive, while the war which the French convention had declared against Great Britain, was on the part of France offensive, the first declaration having been issued by her — that the United States were at all events absolved from the obligation of the guarantee by their inability to perform it, and that under the constitution of the United States the interpretation of treaties, and the obligations resulting from them, were within the competency of the executive department, at least concurrently with the Legislature. It does not appear that these opinions were debated or contested in the Cabinet. By their unanimous advice the proclamation was issued, and it was decided to receive a minister plenipotentiary of the French republic. Thus the executive administration did assume and exercise the power of recognizing a revolutionary foreign government as a legitimate sovereign, with whom the ordinary diplomatic relations were to be entertained. But the proclamation contained no allusion whatever to the United States and France, nor of course to the article of guarantee or its obligations.

Whatever doubts may have been entertained by a large portion of people of the right of the executive to acknowledge a new and revolutionary government, not recognized by any other sovereign State, or of the sound policy of receiving, without waiting for the sanction of Congress, a minister from a republic which had commenced her career by putting to death the King whom she had dethroned, and which had rushed into war with almost all the rest of Europe, no manifestation of such doubts was publicly made. A current of popular favor sustained the French revolution, at that stage of its progress, which nothing



could resist, and far from indulging any question of the right of the President to recognize a new revolutionary government, by receiving from it the credentials which none but sovereigns can grant, the American people would, at that moment, have scarcely endured an instant of hesitation on the part of the President, which should have delayed for an hour the reception of the minister from the republic of France. But the proclamation enjoining neutrality upon the people of the United States, indirectly counteracted the torrent of partiality in favor of France, and was immediately assailed with intemperate violence in many of the public journals. The right of the executive to issue any proclamation of neutrality was fiercely and pertinaciously denied as a usurpation of legislative authority, and in that particular case it was charged with forestalling and prematurely deciding the question whether the United States were bound, by the guarantee to France of her West India possessions in the treaty of alliance, to take side in the war with her against Great Britain — and with deciding it against France.

The proclamation of neutrality was signed on the 22d of April, 1793, and was immediately published. "This measure," says Mr. Sparks, "both in regard to its character and its consequences, was one of the most important of Washington's administration. It was the basis of a system by which the intercourse with foreign nations was regulated, and which was rigidly adhered to. In fact, it was the only step that could have saved the United States from being drawn into the vortex of European wars, which raged with so much violence for a long time afterward. Its wisdom and its good effects are now so obvious, on a calm review of past events, that one is astonished at the opposition it met with, and the strifes it enkindled, even after making due allowance for the passions and prejudices



which had hitherto been at work in producing discord and divisions.”

The proclamation of neutrality furnished the first occasion which was thought a fit one for openly assaulting a character, around which the affections of the people had thrown an armor theretofore deemed sacred, and for directly criminating the conduct of the President himself. It was only by opposing passions to passions, by bringing the feeling in favor of France into conflict with those in favor of the chief magistrate, that the enemies of his administration could hope to obtain the victory.

For a short time the opponents of this measure treated it with some degree of delicacy. The opposition prints occasionally glanced at the executive, considered all governments, including that of the United States, as naturally hostile to the liberty of the people, and ascribed to this disposition the combination of European governments against France, and the apathy with which this combination was contemplated by the executive. At the same time the most vehement declamations were published for the purpose of inflaming the resentments of the people against Britain; of enhancing the obligations of America to France; of confirming the opinions that the coalition of European monarchs was directed not less against the United States than against Great Britain, and that those who did not avow this sentiment were the friends of that coalition, and equally the enemies of America and France.

These publications, in the first instance sufficiently bitter, quickly assumed a highly increased degree of acrimony.

As soon as the commotions which succeeded the deposition of Louis XVI had, in some degree, subsided, the attention of the French government was directed to the United States, and the resolution was taken to recall the minister who had been appointed by the King, and to re-

place him with one who might be expected to enter with more enthusiasm into the views of the republic.

Edmund Charles Genet, a man of considerable talents, and of an ardent temper, was selected for this purpose. The letters he brought to the executive of the United States and his instructions, which he occasionally communicated, were in a high degree flattering to the nation, and decently respectful to its government. But Mr. Genet was also furnished with private instructions, which the course of subsequent events tempted him to publish. These indicated that if the American executive should not be found sufficiently compliant with the views of France, the resolution had been taken to appeal to the people of the United States against their own government, and thus to effect an object which legitimate negotiations might fail to accomplish.

Mr. Genet possessed many qualities which were peculiarly adapted to the objects of his mission, but he seems to have been betrayed by the flattering reception which was given him and by the universal fervor expressed for his republic, into a too speedy disclosure of his intentions.

On the 8th of April (1793) he arrived, not at Philadelphia, but at Charleston in South Carolina, a port whose contiguity to the West Indies would give it peculiar convenience as a resort for privateers. He was received by the governor of that State, and by its citizens, with an enthusiasm well calculated to dissipate every doubt he might previously have entertained concerning the dispositions on which he was to operate. At this place he continued for several days, receiving extravagant marks of public attachment, during which time he undertook to authorize the fitting and arming of vessels in that port, enlisting men, and giving commissions to cruise and commit hostilities on nations with whom the United States were at peace.

The captures made by these cruisers were brought into port and the consuls of France were assuming, under the authority of Mr. Genet, to hold courts of admiralty on them, to try, condemn, and authorize their sale.

From Charleston Mr. Genet proceeded by land to Philadelphia, receiving on his journey at the different towns through which he passed such marks of enthusiastic attachment as had never before been lavished on a foreign minister. On the 16th of May (1793) he arrived at Philadelphia, preceded by the intelligence of his transactions in South Carolina. This information did not diminish the extravagant transports of joy with which he was welcomed by the great body of the inhabitants. Means had been taken to render his entry pompous and triumphal, and the opposition papers exultingly stated that he was met at Gray's ferry by "crowds who flocked from every avenue of the city to meet the republican ambassador of an allied nation."

The day succeeding his arrival he received addresses of congratulation from particular societies, and from the citizens of Philadelphia, who waited on him in a body, in which they expressed their fervent gratitude for the "zealous and disinterested aids" which the French people had furnished to America, unbounded exultation at the success with which their arms had been crowned, and a positive conviction that the safety of the United States depended on the establishment of the republic. The answers to these addresses were well calculated to preserve the idea of a complete fraternity between the two nations, and that their interests were identified.

The day after being thus accredited by the citizens of Philadelphia he was presented to the President, by whom he was received with frankness and with expressions of a sincere and cordial regard for his nation. In the conversa-

tion which took place on this occasion Mr. Genet gave the most explicit assurances that, in consequence of the distance of the United States from the theater of action, and of other circumstances, France did not wish to engage them in war, but would willingly leave them to pursue their happiness and prosperity in peace. The more ready faith was given to these declarations, because it was believed that France might derive advantages from the neutrality of America, which would be a full equivalent for any services which she could render as a belligerent.

Before Genet had reached Philadelphia, however, a long catalogue of complaints, partly founded on his proceedings in Charleston, had been made by the British minister to the American executive.

This catalogue was composed of the assumptions of sovereignty already mentioned—assumptions calculated to render America an instrument of hostility to be wielded by France against those powers with which she might be at war.

These were still further aggravated by the commission of actual hostilities within the territories of the United States. The ship *Grange*, a British vessel which had been cleared out from Philadelphia, was captured by the French frigate *L'Ambuscade* within the capes of the Delaware, while on her way to the ocean.

The prizes thus unwarrantably made, being brought within the power of the American government, Mr. Hammond, among other things, demanded a restitution of them.

On many of the points suggested by the conduct of Mr. Genet, and by the memorials of the British minister, it would seem impossible that any difference of opinion could exist among intelligent men not under the dominion of a blind infatuation. Accordingly it was agreed in the Cabinet,

without a dissenting voice, that the jurisdiction of every independent nation, within the limits of its own territory, being of a nature to exclude the exercise of any authority therein by a foreign power, the proceedings complained of, not being warranted by any treaty, were usurpations of national sovereignty and violations of neutral rights, a repetition of which it was the duty of the government to prevent.

It was also agreed that the efficacy of the laws should be tried against those citizens of the United States who had joined in perpetrating the offense.

The question of restitution, except as to the "Grange," was more dubious. The cabinet agreed, however, that the original owners might claim indemnification, and that if the property was not restored by the captors, the value of it ought to be paid by the government of the United States.

Genet was much dissatisfied with these decisions of the American government. He denounced them as contrary to natural right, and subversive of the treaties by which the two nations were connected. In his exposition of these treaties, he claimed, for his own country, all that the two nations were restricted from conceding to others, thereby converting negative limitations into an affirmative grant of privileges to France.

Without noticing a want of decorum in some of the expressions which Genet had employed, he was informed that the subjects on which his letter treated had, from respect to him, been reconsidered by the executive; but that no cause was perceived for changing the system which had been adopted. He was further informed that, in the opinion of the President, the United States owed it to themselves and to the nations in their friendship, to expect, as a reparation for the offense of infringing their sovereignty,

that the vessels thus illegally equipped would depart from their ports.

Genet was not disposed to acquiesce in these decisions. Adhering to his own construction of the existing treaty, he affected to consider the measures of the American government as infractions of it, which no power in the nation had a right to make, unless the United States in Congress assembled should determine that their solemn engagements should no longer be performed. Intoxicated with the sentiments expressed by a great portion of the people, and unacquainted with the firm character of Washington, he seems to have expected that the popularity of his nation would enable him to overthrow the administration, or to render it subservient to his views. It is difficult otherwise to account for his persisting to disregard its decisions, and for passages with which his letters abound, such as the following:

“Every obstruction by the government of the United States to the arming of French vessels must be an attempt on the rights of man, upon which repose the independence and laws of the United States; a violation of the ties which unite the people of France and America; and even a manifest contradiction of the system of neutrality of the President; for, in fact, if our merchant vessels, as others, are not allowed to arm themselves, when the French alone are resisting the league of all the tyrants against the liberty of the people, they will be exposed to inevitable ruin in going out of the ports of the United States, which is certainly not the intention of the people of America. Their fraternal voice has resounded from every quarter around me, and their accents are not equivocal. They are pure as the hearts of those by whom they are expressed, and the more they have touched my sensibility, the more they must interest in the happiness of America the nation I



represent;—the more I wish, sir, that the Federal government should observe, as far as in their power, the public engagements contracted by both nations; and that, by this generous and prudent conduct, they will give at least to the world the example of a true neutrality, which does not consist in the cowardly abandonment of their friends in the moment when danger menaces them, but in adhering strictly, if they can do no better, to the obligations they have contracted with them. It is by such proceedings that they will render themselves respectable to all the powers; that they will preserve their friends and deserve to augment their numbers.”

A few days previous to the reception of the letter from which the above is an extract, two citizens of the United States, who had been engaged by Genet in Charleston to cruise in the service of France, were arrested by the civil magistrate, in pursuance of the determination formed by the executive for the prosecution of persons having thus offended against the laws. Genet demanded their release in the following extraordinary terms :

“I have this moment been informed that two officers in the service of the republic of France, citizen Gideon Henfield and John Singletary, have been arrested on board the privateer of the French republic, the Citizen Genet, and conducted to prison. The crime laid to their charge — the crime which my mind cannot conceive, and which my pen almost refuses to state — is the serving of France, and defending with her children the common glorious cause of liberty.

“Being ignorant of any positive law or treaty which deprives Americans of this privilege, and authorizes officers of police arbitrarily to take mariners in the service of France from on board their vessels, I call upon your intervention, sir, and that of the President of the United States,

in order to obtain the immediate releasement of the above-mentioned officers, who have acquired, by the sentiments animating them and by the act of their engagement, anterior to every act to the contrary, the right of French citizens, if they have lost that of American citizens."

Such an insolent style of address as this could not be otherwise than deeply offensive to Washington. He must have regarded this, and most of the other effusions of Genet, as studied insults, not only to himself, but to the country of which he was the chief magistrate. Yet, in no single instance did the administration in its communications with Genet, permit itself to be betrayed into the use of one intemperate expression. The firmness with which his extravagant pretensions were resisted, proceeding entirely from a sense of duty and conviction of right, was unaccompanied with any marks of that resentment which his language and his conduct were alike calculated to inspire.

Genet's intemperate language and insolent conduct arose from a belief that the people were ready to support his pretensions, in opposition to their own government. This belief was strengthened by the proceedings and publications of the party opposed to the administration. Civic festivals and other public assemblages of people, at which the ensigns of France were displayed in union with those of America — at which the red cap, as a symbol of French liberty and fraternity, triumphantly passed from head to head — at which toasts were given expressive of a desire to identify the people of America with those of France, and, under the imposing guise of adhering to principles not to men, containing allusions to the influence of the President which could not be mistaken — appeared to Genet to indicate a temper extremely favorable to his hopes, and very different from that which would be required for the preservation of an honest neutrality.

Through the medium of the press, these sentiments were communicated to the public, and were represented as flowing from the hearts of the great body of the people.

Soon after the arrival of Genet, a democratic society was formed in Philadelphia on the model of the Jacobin clubs in Paris. An anxious solicitude for the preservation of freedom, the very existence of which was menaced by a "European confederacy transcendent in power and unparalleled in iniquity," which was endangered also by "the pride of wealth and arrogance of power" displayed within the United States, was the motive assigned for the association. "A constant circulation of useful information, and a liberal communication of republican sentiments, were thought to be the best antidotes to any political poison with which the vital principle of civil liberty might be attacked;" and to give the more extensive operation to their labors, a corresponding committee was appointed, through whom they would communicate with other societies which might be established on similar principles throughout the United States.

Faithful to their founder, and true to the real objects of their association, these societies continued during the term of their existence to be the resolute champions of all the encroachments attempted by the agents of the French republic on the government of the United States, and the steady defamers of the views and measures of the American executive.

Thus strongly supported, Genet persisted in his construction of the treaties between the two nations, and, in defiance of the positive determination of the government, continued to act according to that construction.

At this period Washington was called to Mount Vernon by urgent business, which detained him less than three weeks; and, in his absence, the heads of departments

superintended the execution of those rules which had been previously established.

In this short interval a circumstance occurred, strongly marking the rashness of Genet, and his disrespect to the executive of the United States.

The *Little Sarah*, an English merchantman, had been captured by a French frigate and brought into the port of Philadelphia, where she was completely equipped as a privateer, and was just about to sail on a cruise, under the name of *le Petit Democrat*, when Hamilton communicated her situation to Jefferson and Knox, the Secretaries of State and of War; in consequence of which, Governor Mifflin was desired to cause an examination of the fact. The warden of the port was directed to institute the proper inquiries, and, late in the evening of the 6th of July, he reported her situation, and that she was to sail the next day.

In pursuance of the instructions which had been given by the President, the governor immediately sent Secretary Dallas for the purpose of prevailing on Genet to relieve him from the employment of force, by detaining the vessel in port until the arrival of Washington, who was then on his way from Mount Vernon. Mr. Dallas communicated this message to the French minister in terms as conciliatory as its nature would permit. On receiving it, he gave loose to the most extravagant passion. After exclaiming with vehemence against the measure, he complained, in strong terms, and with many angry epithets, of the ill treatment which he had received from some of the officers of the general government, which he contrasted with the cordial attachment that was expressed by the people at large for his nation. He ascribed the conduct of those officers to principles inimical to the cause of France and of liberty. He insinuated that, by their influence, Washington had been misled, and observed, with considerable emphasis,

that the President was not the sovereign of this country. The powers of peace and war being vested in Congress, it belonged to that body to decide those questions growing out of treaties which might involve peace or war, and the President, therefore, ought to have assembled the national Legislature before he ventured to issue his proclamation of neutrality, or to prohibit, by his instructions to the State governors, the enjoyment of the particular rights which France claimed under the express stipulations of the treaty of commerce. The executive construction of that treaty was neither just nor obligatory, and he would make no engagement which might be construed into a relinquishment of rights which his constituents deemed indispensable. In the course of this vehement and angry declamation, he spoke of publishing his correspondence with the officers of government, together with a narrative of his proceedings, and said that, although the existing causes would warrant an abrupt departure, his regard for the people of America would induce him to remain here, amidst the insults and disgusts that he daily suffered in his official character from the public officers, until the meeting of Congress, and if that body should agree in the opinions and support the measures of the President, he would certainly withdraw, and leave the dispute to be adjusted between the two nations themselves. His attention being again called by Mr. Dallas to the particular subject, he peremptorily refused to enter into any arrangements for suspending the departure of the privateer, and cautioned him against any attempt to seize her, as she belonged to the republic, and, in defense of the honor of her flag, would unquestionably repel force by force.

On receiving the report of Mr. Dallas, Governor Mifflin ordered out 120 militia, for the purpose of taking possession of the privateer, and communicated the case, with

all its circumstances, to the officers of the executive government. On the succeeding day, Jefferson waited on Genet, in the hope of prevailing on him to pledge his word that the privateer should not leave the port until the arrival of the President. The minister was not less intemperate with Jefferson than he had been with Dallas. He indulged himself in a repetition of nearly the same passionate language, and again spoke, with extreme harshness of the conduct of the executive. He persisted in refusing to make any engagements for the detention of the vessel, and, after his rage had in some degree spent itself, he entreated that no attempt might be made to take possession of her, as her crew was on board, and force would be repelled by force.

He then also said that she was not ready to sail immediately. She would change her position and fall down the river a small distance on that day, but was not yet ready to sail.

In communicating this conversation to Governor Mifflin, Jefferson stated his conviction that the privateer would remain in the river until the President should decide on her case, in consequence of which, the governor dismissed the militia, and requested the advice of the heads of departments on the course which it would be proper for him to pursue. Both the governor and Jefferson stated, that in reporting the conversation between Genet and himself, Dallas had said that Genet threatened, in express terms, "to appeal from the President to the people."

Thus braved and insulted in the very heart of the country, Hamilton and Knox were of opinion that it was expedient to take immediate measures for establishing a battery on Mud Island, under cover of a party of militia, with directions, that if the vessel should attempt to depart before the pleasure of the President should be known concerning



her, military coercion should be employed to arrest her progress.

The Secretary of State dissenting from this opinion, the measure was not adopted. The vessel fell down to Chester before the arrival of Washington and sailed on her cruise before the power of the government could be interposed.

On the 11th of July (1793), Washington reached Philadelphia, and requested that the Cabinet ministers would convene at his house the next day at 9 in the morning.

Among the important papers placed in his hands, which required immediate attention were those which related to the *Little Democrat*. On reading them, a messenger was immediately dispatched for Jefferson, but he had retired, indisposed, to his seat in the country. Upon hearing this, the President instantly addressed a letter to him, of which the following is an extract: "What is to be done in the case of the *Little Sarah*, now at Chester? Is the minister of the French republic to set the acts of this government at defiance with impunity and then threaten the executive with an appeal to the people? What must the world think of such conduct, and of the government of the United States in submitting to it?

"These are serious questions. Circumstances press for decision, and as you have had time to consider them (upon me they come unexpectedly), I wish to know your opinion upon them even before to-morrow, for the vessel may then be gone."

In answer to this letter, Jefferson stated the assurances which had on that day been given to him by Genet, that the vessel would not sail before the President's decision respecting her should be made. In consequence of this information, immediate coercive measures were suspended, and in the council of the succeeding day it was determined to retain in port all privateers which had been equipped by

any of the belligerent powers within the United States. Genet was informed of this determination, but in contempt of it, the *Little Democrat* proceeded on her cruise. This proceeding furnished a subject of exultation to the opponents of the government, as did also the acquittal by a Charleston jury of Gideon Henfield, who had been arrested for shipping on board a French privateer, he being an American citizen.

While the correspondence between Genet and Jefferson concerning this affair was still going on, the former obtained cause of complaint on his part, and urged that the British were in the habit of taking French property out of American vessels, in contravention of the principles of neutrality avowed by the rest of Europe. His letters to Jefferson on this subject were still more insulting than those which had preceded them. On the 9th of July (1793), he wrote to Jefferson, demanding an instant answer to the question — What measures the President had taken, or would take, to cause the American flag to be respected? Receiving no answer, toward the end of July he again addressed the Secretary of State on the subject. In this extraordinary letter, after complaining of the insults offered to the American flag by seizing the property of Frenchmen confided to its protection, he added: “Your political rights are counted for nothing. In vain do the principles of neutrality establish that friendly vessels make friendly goods; in vain, sir, does the President of the United States endeavor, by his proclamation, to reclaim the observation of this maxim; in vain does the desire of preserving peace lead to sacrifice the interests of France to that of the moment; in vain does the thirst of riches preponderate over honor in the political balance of America — all this management, all this condescension, all this humility, end in nothing; our enemies laugh at it; and the French, too

confident, are punished for having believed that the American nation had a flag, that they had some respect for their laws, some conviction of their strength, and entertained some sentiment of their dignity. It is not possible for me, sir, to paint to you all my sensibility at this scandal, which tends to the diminution of your commerce, to the oppression of ours, and to the debasement and vilification of republics. It is for the Americans to make known their generous indignation at this outrage, and I must confine myself to demand of you, a second time, to inform me of the measures which you have taken in order to obtain restitution of the property plundered from my fellow-citizens under the protection of your flag. It is from our government they have learned that the Americans were our allies, that the American nation was sovereign, and that they knew how to make themselves respected. It is then under the very same sanction of the French nation that they have confided their property and persons to the safeguard of the American flag, and on her they submit the care of causing those rights to be respected. But if our fellow-citizens have been deceived, if you are not in a condition to maintain the sovereignty of your people, speak; we have guaranteed it when slaves, we shall be able to render it formidable, having become freemen."

On the day preceding the date of this offensive letter, Jefferson had answered that of the 9th of July, and, without noticing the unbecoming style in which the decision of the executive was demanded, had avowed and defended the opinion that, "by the general law of nations, the goods of an enemy found in the vessels of a friend, are lawful prize." This fresh insult might therefore be passed over in silence.

While a hope remained that the temperate forbearance of the President, and the unceasing manifestations of his

friendly dispositions toward the French republic might induce the minister of that nation to respect the rights of the United States, and to abstain from violations of their sovereignty, an anxious solicitude not to impair the harmony which he wished to maintain between the two republics had restrained him from adopting those measures respecting Genet which his conduct required. He had seen a foreign minister usurp, within the territories of the United States, some of the most important rights of sovereignty, and persist, after the prohibition of the government in the exercise of those rights. In asserting this extravagant claim, so incompatible with national independence, the spirit in which it originated had been pursued, and the haughty style of a superior had been substituted for the respectful language of diplomacy. He had seen the same minister undertake to direct the civil government, and to pronounce, in opposition to the decisions of the executive, in what departments the constitution of the United States had placed certain great national powers. To render this state of things more peculiarly critical and embarrassing, the person most instrumental in producing it had, from his arrival, thrown himself into the arms of the people, stretched out to receive him, and was emboldened by their favor to indulge the hope of succeeding in his endeavors, either to overthrow their government, or to bend it to his will. But the full experiment had now been made, and the result was a conviction not to be resisted, that moderation would only invite additional injuries, and that the present insufferable state of things could be terminated only by procuring the removal of the French minister, or by submitting to become, in his hands, the servile instrument of hostility against the enemies of his nation. Information was continually received from every quarter of fresh aggressions on the principles established by the gov-

ernment, and, while the executive was thus openly disregarded and contemned, the members of the administration were reproached, in all the papers of an active and restless opposition, as the violators of the national faith, the partisans of monarchy, and the enemies of liberty and of France.

The unwearied efforts to preserve that station in which the various treaties in existence had placed the nation were incessantly calumniated as infractions of those treaties, and ungrateful attempts to force the United States into a war against France.

The judgment of Washington was never hastily formed, but, once made up, it was seldom to be shaken. Before the last letter of Genet was communicated to him he had decided to terminate future intercourse with him.

In a Cabinet council the whole matter was carefully reviewed, and it was unanimously agreed that Gouverneur Morris, the American minister at Paris, should present the whole case to the French government and request Genet's recall. The faction by whom he had been originally sent out having passed out of power, this was easily effected.

At the same time the Cabinet, under Washington's direction, drew up a system of rules to be observed by the belligerents in the ports of the United States. These rules evidence the settled purpose of the executive faithfully to observe all the national engagements and honestly to perform the duties of that neutrality in which the war found them and in which those engagements left them free to remain.

Neutrality between belligerents is a difficult and delicate part to sustain. It was not France alone that advanced extraordinary pretensions. The British government issued orders for stopping all neutral ships, laden with provisions,

bound for the ports of France, thus declaring that country in a state of blockade. The National Convention of France had, indeed, set the example of this by an act of the same tendency, doubly rash, because impotent. But this, however strong a plea for retaliating upon France, was none for making America suffer. Corn, indeed, formed the chief export of the United States, and to prohibit them from shipping it at all — for the new regulation amounted in fact to this — was a grievance which the most pacific neutral could scarcely submit to. Another continually recurring source of complaint on the part of the United States against England was the pressing of their seamen, which the difficulty of distinguishing between natives of the two countries rendered of frequent occurrence and tardy rectification. These causes came to swell the tide of faction in America as the enemies of England and of authoritative institutions took advantage of them to raise their cry, whilst the anti-gallican, on the other hand, were as indignant against the arrogance of the French and of their envoy.

Genet was in New York receiving all sorts of demonstrations of approbation and attachment from his political friends when he received notice of his recall (September, 1793). His rage was indescribable. He wrote to Jefferson a letter full of the most atrocious abuse of Washington and the administration generally, in which Jefferson himself was not spared. But as his powers of mischief were now at an end very slight notice was taken of his splenetic effusions. It appeared in the sequel, however, that he had not confined his attempts to employ the force of America against the enemies of his country to maritime enterprises. On his first arrival he is understood to have planned an expedition against the Floridas, to be carried on from Georgia, and another against Louisiana, to be carried on



from the western parts of the United States. Intelligence was received that the principal officers were engaged, and the temper of the people inhabiting the western country was such as to furnish some ground for the apprehension that the restraints which the executive was capable of imposing, would be found too feeble to prevent the execution of this plan. The remonstrances of the Spanish commissioners on this subject, however, were answered with explicit assurances that the government would effectually interpose to defeat any expedition from the territories of the United States against those of Spain, and the governor of Kentucky was requested to co-operate in frustrating this improper application of the military resources of his State.

While Genet was in New York a schooner, brought as a prize into the port of Boston by a French privateer, was claimed by the British owner, who instituted proceedings at law against her for the purpose of obtaining a decision on the validity of her capture. She was rescued from the possession of the marshal by an armed force, acting under the authority of Mr. Duplaine, the French consul, which was detached from a frigate then lying in port. Until the frigate sailed she was guarded by a part of the crew, and, notwithstanding the determination of the American government that the consular courts should not exercise a prize jurisdiction within the territories of the United States, Mr. Duplaine declared his purpose to take cognizance of the case.

To this act of open defiance it was impossible for Washington to submit. The facts being well attested, the exequatur which had been granted to Mr. Duplaine was revoked and he was forbidden further to exercise the consular functions. It will excite surprise that even this necessary measure could not escape censure. The self-proclaimed

champions of liberty discovered in it a violation of the constitution and a new indignity to France.

Meantime events were transpiring in Europe which added not a little to the excitement in the public mind against Great Britain. For many years war had existed between Portugal and Algiers. In consequence of this Algerine cruisers had been confined to the Mediterranean by a Portuguese fleet, and the commerce of the United States, as well as that of Portugal herself, had been protected in the Atlantic from piratical depredations. In September, 1793, an unexpected truce for a year was concluded between Portugal and Algiers. The Dey's cruisers, therefore, immediately, and without previous notice, passed into the Atlantic, and American vessels, while on their way to Portugal and other parts of Europe, and without the smallest suspicion of danger, became a prey to these lawless freebooters, and many American seamen were doomed to slavery. There was no reasonable doubt that England had a great deal to do with this matter and that, besides her determination to carry on war against France, she was not very unwilling that the United States should also suffer the evils incident to their commerce being entirely unprotected by any naval force.

The causes of discontent which were furnished by Spain, as Marshall states, though less the theme of public declamation, continued to be considerable. That which related to the Mississippi was peculiarly embarrassing. The opinion had been industriously circulated that an opposition of interests existed between the eastern and the western people, and that the endeavors of the executive to open this great river were feeble and insincere. At a meeting of the Democratic Society in Lexington, Kentucky, this sentiment was unanimously avowed in terms of extreme disrespect to the government, and a committee

was appointed to open a correspondence with the inhabitants of the entire west for the purpose of uniting them on this subject and of preparing a remonstrance to the President and Congress of the United States, to be expressed "in the bold, decent, and determined language proper to be used by injured freemen when they address the servants of the people." They claimed much merit for having thus long abstained from using the means they possessed, for the assertion of "a natural and unalienable right," and indicated their opinion that this forbearance could not be long continued. The probability that the public expression of these dangerous dispositions would perpetuate the evil could not moderate them. This restless temper gave additional importance to the expedition of Genet projected against Louisiana.

Private communications strengthened the apprehensions entertained by the President that hostilities with Spain were not far distant. The government had received intelligence from their ministers in Europe that propositions had been made by the Cabinet of Madrid to that of London, the object of which was the United States. The precise nature of these propositions was not ascertained, but it was understood generally that their tendency was hostile, and Washington, writing to the Secretary of War, in June, urged the importance of ascertaining the Spanish force in the Floridas and such other matters as might be necessary in view of the possible outbreak of a contest with Spain.

We must now return to Washington, who, the reader will have perceived, surrounded by the urgent nature of his official duties and the disturbed state of public affairs, had been detained at Philadelphia during a great portion of the recess of Congress. He left that place for Mount Vernon toward the end of September, after the ravages of the terrible yellow fever of 1793 had already commenced

in the city. He remained at Mount Vernon till near the end of October.\*

During this time he was in constant correspondence with the members of the Cabinet, of whom Jefferson appears to have retired to Virginia and the other heads of departments to other places to avoid the contagion of the fever.

The principal topic discussed in this correspondence was the constitutional power of the President to change the place in which Congress were to reassemble in December — Philadelphia being considered unsafe. Germantown, Wilmington, Trenton, Annapolis, Reading, and Lancaster were suggested each in turn as suitable places, but the power of the President to change the place was doubted on all hands. As the fever subsided, however, the meeting actually took place in Philadelphia on the day appointed by adjournment.

Among those whom Washington consulted on the subject of the constitutional power to change the place for the meeting of Congress was Mr. Madison. Washington's letter to him, dated Mount Vernon, October 14, 1793, evinces his anxiety to avoid a violation of the constitution, while it presents a lively picture of the state of disorder in the departments, occasioned by the pestilence at the seat of government. "The calamitous situation of Philadelphia," he writes, "and the little prospect, from the present appearance, of its eligibility to receive Congress by the first Monday in December, involve a serious difficulty. It has been intimated by some that the President ought, by proclamation, to convene Congress a few days before the above-mentioned period, at some other place, and by others that, although in extraordinary cases he has the power to convene, he has none to change the place. Mr.

\* On the 8th of October John Hancock died at Boston.

Jefferson, when here on his way home, was of the latter opinion, but the laws were not fully examined, nor was the case at that time so serious as it now is. From the Attorney-General (Randolph), to whom I have since written on this subject, requesting an official opinion, I have received no answer, nor is it likely I shall soon, as I believe he has no communication with Philadelphia. Time presses and the malady at the usual place of meeting is becoming more and more alarming. What then do you think is the most advisable course for me to pursue in the present exigency — summon Congress to meet at a certain time and place in their legislative capacity? Simply state facts and say that I will meet the members at the time and place just mentioned for ulterior arrangements? Or leave matters as they are if there is no power in the executive to alter the place legally? In the first and second cases, especially the first, the delicacy of my naming a place will readily occur to you. My wish would be that Congress could be assembled at Germantown to show that I meant no partiality, leaving it to themselves, if there should be no prospect of getting into Philadelphia soon, to decide what should be done thereafter. But accounts say that some people have died in Germantown also of the malignant fever. Every death, now, however, is ascribed to that cause, be the disorder what it may. Wilmington and Trenton are almost equidistant from Philadelphia in opposite directions, but both are on the great thoroughfare and equally exposed to danger from the multitude of travellers, and neither may have a chamber sufficient for the House of Representatives. Annapolis and Lancaster are more secure and both have good accommodations. But to name either of them, especially the first, would be thought to favor the southern convenience, and, perhaps, might be attributed to local views, especially as New York

is talked of for this purpose. Reading, if there are proper conveniences there, would favor neither the southern nor northern interest most, but would be alike to both.

"I have written to Mr. Jefferson on this subject. Notwithstanding which, I would thank you for your opinion and that fully, as you see my embarrassment. I even ask more. I would thank you, not being acquainted with forms, to sketch some instrument for publication, adapted to the course you may think it would be most expedient for me to pursue in the present state of things, if the members are called together as before mentioned.

"The difficulty of keeping clerks in the public offices had in a manner put a stop to business before I left Philadelphia, and the heads of departments having matters of their own, which called them away, has prevented my return thither longer than I had intended. I have now desired the different secretaries to meet me there, or in the vicinity, the 1st of next month, for which I shall set out the 27th or the 28th of the present.

"The accounts from the city are really affecting. Two gentlemen now here from New York, Colonels Platt and Sergeant, say that they were told at the Swede's ford of Schuylkill, by a person who had it from Governor Mifflin, that, by an official report from the mayor of the city, upward of 3,500 had died, and that the disorder was raging more violently than ever. If cool weather, accompanied by rain, does not put a stop to the malady, distressing indeed must be the case of that city, now almost depopulated by removals and deaths."\*

\* The whole number that died during the prevalence of the yellow fever in Philadelphia was over 4,000.



## CHAPTER VII.

### WASHINGTON SENDS JAY TO ENGLAND.

1793-1794.

THE time appointed for the reassembling of Congress was the first Monday in December. Washington had arrived at Philadelphia, and the heads of departments were at their posts before the end of November.

Although the fear of contagion was not entirely dispelled when the time for the meeting of Congress arrived, yet, such was the active zeal of parties, and such the universal expectation that important executive communications would be made, and that legislative measures not less important would be founded on them, that both Houses were full on the first day, and a joint committee waited on the President with the usual information that they were ready to receive his communications.

On the 4th of December (1793), at 12, the President met both Houses in the Senate chamber. His speech was moderate, firm, dignified, and interesting. It commenced with his own re-election, his feelings at which were thus expressed:

“ Since the commencement of the term for which I have been again called into office, no fit occasion has arisen for expressing to my fellow-citizens at large, the deep and respectful sense which I feel of the renewed testimony of public approbation. While, on the one hand, it awakened my gratitude for all those instances of affectionate partiality with which I have been honored by my country, on the other, it could not prevent an earnest wish for that

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retirement, from which no private consideration could ever have torn me. But, influenced by the belief that my conduct would be estimated according to its real motives, and that the people, and the authorities derived from them, would support exertions having nothing personal for their object, I have obeyed the suffrage which commanded me to resume the executive power, and I humbly implore that Being on whose will the fate of nations depends, to crown with success our mutual endeavors for the general happiness."

Passing to those measures which had been adopted by the executive for the regulation of its conduct toward the belligerent nations, he observed: "As soon as the war in Europe had embraced those powers with whom the United States have the most extensive relations, there was reason to apprehend that our intercourse with them might be interrupted, and our disposition for peace drawn into question by suspicions too often entertained by belligerent nations. It seemed therefore to be my duty to admonish our citizens of the consequence of a contraband trade, and of hostile acts to any of the parties, and to obtain, by a declaration of the existing state of things, an easier admission of our rights to the immunities belonging to our situation. Under these impressions the proclamation which will be laid before you was issued.

"In this posture of affairs, both new and delicate, I resolved to adopt general rules which should conform to the treaties, and assert the privileges of the United States. These were reduced into a system which shall be communicated to you."

After suggesting those legislative provisions on this subject, the necessity of which had been pointed out by experience, he proceeded to say:

"I cannot recommend to your notice measures for the

fulfilment of our duties to the rest of the world, without again pressing upon you the necessity of placing ourselves in a condition of complete defense, and of exacting from them the fulfilment of their duties toward us. The United States ought not to indulge a persuasion that, contrary to the order of human events, they will forever keep at a distance those painful appeals to arms with which the history of every nation abounds. There is a rank due to the United States among nations which will be withheld, if not absolutely lost by the reputation of weakness. If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it: if we desire to secure peace—one of the most powerful instruments of our prosperity—it must be known that we are at all times ready for war.”

These observations were followed by a recommendation to augment the supply of arms and ammunition in the magazines, and to improve the militia establishment.

After referring to a communication to be subsequently made for occurrences relative to the connection of the United States with Europe, which had, he said, become extremely interesting, and, after reviewing Indian affairs, he particularly addressed the House of Representatives. Having presented to them in detail some subjects of which it was proper they should be informed, he added: “No pecuniary consideration is more urgent than the regular redemption and discharge of the public debt; on none can delay be more injurious, or an economy of time more valuable.

“The productiveness of the public revenues hitherto has continued to be equal to the anticipations which were formed of it; but it is not expected to prove commensurate with all the objects which have been suggested. Some auxiliary provisions will therefore, it is presumed, be requisite; and it is hoped that these may be made consistently with



WASHINGTON AND FAMILY AT MOUNT VERNON.



a due regard to the convenience of our citizens who cannot but be sensible of the true wisdom of encountering a small present addition to their contributions, to obviate a future accumulation of burdens."

The speech was concluded with the following impressive exhortation:

"The several subjects to which I have now referred, open a wide range to your deliberations and involve some of the choicest interests of our common country. Permit me to bring to your remembrance the magnitude of your task. Without an unprejudiced coolness, the welfare of the government may be hazarded; without harmony, as far as consists with freedom of sentiment, its dignity may be lost. But as the legislative proceedings of the United States will never, I trust, be reproached for the want of temper or of candor, so shall not the public happiness languish from the want of my strenuous and warmest co-operation."

The day succeeding that on which this speech was delivered, a special message was sent to both houses containing some of the promised communications relative to the connection of the United States with foreign powers.

After suggesting, as a motive for this communication, that it not only disclosed "matter of interesting inquiry to the Legislature," but "might indeed give rise to deliberations to which they alone were competent," the President added: "The representative and executive bodies of France have manifested generally a friendly attachment to this country; have given advantages to our commerce and navigation; and have made overtures for placing these advantages on permanent ground. A decree, however, of the National Assembly, subjecting vessels laden with provisions to be carried into their ports, and making enemy goods lawful prize in the vessel of a friend, contrary to our treaty, though revoked at one time as to the United States,



has been since extended to their vessels also, as has been recently stated to us. Representations on the subject will be immediately given in charge to our minister there, and the result shall be communicated to the Legislature.

“It is with extreme concern I have to inform you that the person whom they have unfortunately appointed their minister plenipotentiary here, has breathed nothing of the friendly spirit of the nation which sent him. Their tendency, on the contrary, has been to involve us in a war abroad and discord and anarchy at home. So far as his acts, or those of his agents, have threatened an immediate commitment in the war, or flagrant insult to the authority of the laws, their effect has been counteracted by the ordinary cognizance of the laws and by an exertion of the powers confided to me. Where their danger was not imminent, they have been borne with, from sentiments of regard of his nation, from a sense of their friendship toward us, from a conviction that they would not suffer us to remain long exposed to the actions of a person who has so little respected our mutual dispositions, and, I will add, from a reliance on the firmness of my fellow-citizens in their principles of peace and order. In the meantime I have respected and pursued the stipulations of our treaties, according to what I judged their true sense, and have withheld no act of friendship which their affairs have called for from us, and which justice to others left us free to perform. I have gone further. Rather than employ force for the restitution of certain vessels which I deemed the United States bound to restore, I thought it more advisable to satisfy the parties by avowing it to be my opinion that, if restitution were not made, it would be incumbent on the United States to make compensation.”

The message next proceeded to state that inquiries had been instituted respecting the vexations and spoliations

committed on the commerce of the United States, the result of which, when received, would be communicated.

The order issued by the British government on the 8th of June (1793), and the measures taken by the executive of the United States in consequence thereof, were briefly noticed, and the discussions which had taken place in relation to the nonexecution of the treaty of peace, were also mentioned. The message was then concluded with a reference to the negotiations with Spain. "The public good," it was said, "requiring that the present state of these should be made known to the Legislature in confidence only, they would be the subject of a separate and subsequent communication."

This message was accompanied with copies of the correspondence between the Secretary of State and the French minister, on the points of difference which subsisted between the two governments, together with several documents necessary for the establishment of particular facts, and with the letter written by Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Morris, which justified the conduct of the United States by arguments too clear to be misunderstood, and too strong ever to be controverted.

The extensive discussions which had taken place relative to the nonexecution of the treaty of peace, and the correspondence produced by the objectionable measures which had been adopted by the British government during the existing war, were also laid before the Legislature.

In a popular government the representatives of the people may generally be considered as a mirror, reflecting truly the passions and feelings which govern their constituents. In the late elections, the strength of parties had been tried, and the opposition had derived so much aid from associating the cause of France with its own principles, as to furnish much reason to suspect that, in one

branch of the Legislature at least, it had become the majority. The first act of the House of Representatives served to strengthen this suspicion. By each party a candidate for the chair was brought forward, and Mr. Muhlenberg, who was supported by the opposition, was elected by a majority of ten votes, against Mr. Sedgewick, whom the Federalists supported.

The answer, however, to Washington's speech, bore no tinge of that malignant and furious spirit which had infused itself into the publications of the day. Breathing the same affectionate attachment to his person and character which had been professed in other times, and being approved by every part of the House, it indicated that the leaders, at least, still venerated their chief magistrate, and that no general intention as yet existed to involve him in the obloquy directed against his measures.

Noticing that unanimous suffrage by which he had been again called to his present station, "it was," they said, "with equal sincerity and promptitude they embraced the occasion for expressing to him their congratulations on so distinguished a testimony of public approbation, and their entire confidence in the purity and patriotism of the motives which had produced this obedience to the voice of his country. It is," proceeded the address, "to virtues which have commanded long and universal reverence, and services from which have flowed great and lasting benefits, that the tribute of praise may be paid without the reproach of flattery; and it is from the same sources that the fairest anticipations may be derived in favor of the public happiness."

The proclamation of neutrality was approved in guarded terms, and the topics of the speech were noticed in a manner which indicated dispositions cordially to co-operate with the executive.

On the part of the Senate, also, the answer to the speech

was unfeignedly affectionate. In warm terms they expressed the pleasure which the re-election of Washington gave them. "In the unanimity," they added, "which a second time marks this important national act, we trace with particular satisfaction, besides the distinguished tribute paid to the virtues and abilities which it recognizes, another proof of that discernment, and constancy of sentiments and views, which have hitherto characterized the citizens of the United States." Speaking of the proclamation, they declared it to be "a measure well timed and wise, manifesting a watchful solicitude for the welfare of the nation, and calculated to promote it."

In a few days a confidential message from Washington was delivered, communicating the critical situation of affairs with Spain. The negotiations attempted with that power in regard to the interesting objects of boundary, navigation, and commerce, had been exposed to much delay and embarrassment, in consequence of the changes which the French revolution had effected in the political state of Europe. Meanwhile, the neighborhood of the Spanish colonies to the United States had given rise to various other subjects of discussion, one of which had assumed a very serious aspect.

Having the best reason to suppose that the hostility of the southern Indians was excited by the agents of Spain, Washington had directed the American commissioners at Madrid to make the proper representations on the subject and to propose that each nation should, with good faith, promote the peace of the other with their savage neighbors.

About the same time the Spanish government entertained, or affected to entertain, corresponding suspicions of like hostile excitements by the agents of the United States, to disturb their peace with the same nations. The repre-

sentations which were induced by these real or affected suspicions were accompanied with pretensions and made in a style to which the American executive could not be inattentive. The King of Spain asserted these claims as a patron and protector of those Indians. He assumed a right to mediate between them and the United States, and to interfere in the establishment of their boundaries. At length, in the very moment when those savages were committing daily inroads on the American frontier, at the instigation of Spain, as was believed, the representatives of that power, complaining of the aggressions of American citizens on the Indians, declared "that the continuation of the peace, good harmony, and perfect friendship of the two nations was very problematical for the future, unless the United States should take more convenient measures, and of greater energy than those adopted for a long time past."

Notwithstanding the zeal and enthusiasm with which the pretensions of the French republic, as asserted by their minister Genet, continued to be supported out of doors, they found no open advocate in either branch of the Legislature. This circumstance is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to the temperate conduct of the executive, and to the convincing arguments with which its decisions were supported.

But when it is recollected that the odium which these decisions excited sustained no diminution; that the accusation of hostility to France and to liberty, which originated in them, was not retracted; that, when afterwards many of the controverted claims were renewed by France, her former advocates still adhered to her; it is not unreasonable to suppose that other considerations mingled themselves with the conviction which the correspondence laid before the Legislature was calculated to produce.

An attack on the administration could be placed on no



ground more disadvantageous than on its controversy with Mr. Genet. The conduct and language of that minister were offensive to reflecting men of all parties. The President had himself taken so decisive a part in favor of the measures which had been adopted that they must be ascribed to him, not to his Cabinet, and, of consequence, the whole weight of his personal character must be directly encountered in an attempt to censure those measures. From this censure it would have been difficult to extricate the person who was contemplated by the party in opposition as its chief; for the Secretary of State had urged the arguments of the administration with a degree of ability and earnestness, which ought to have silenced the suspicion that he might not feel their force.\*

The expression of a legislative opinion, in favor of the points insisted on by the French minister, would probably have involved the nation in a calamitous war, the whole responsibility for which would rest on them.

To these considerations was added another, which could not be disregarded. The party in France, to which Mr. Genet owed his appointment, had lost its power, and his fall was the inevitable consequence of the fall of his patrons. That he would probably be recalled was known in America, and that his conduct had been disapproved by his government, was generally believed. The future system of the French republic, with regard to the United States, could not be foreseen, and it would be committing something to hazard not to wait its development.

These objections did not exist to an indulgence of the partialities and prejudices of the nation towards the beligerent powers in measures suggested by its resentment against Great Britain. But, independent of these considera-

\* Marshall.



tions, it is scarcely possible to doubt that Congress really approved the conduct of the executive with regard to France, and was also convinced that a course of hostility had been pursued by Great Britain which the national interest and national honor required them to repel. In the irritable state of the public mind, it was not difficult to produce this opinion.

Early in the session a report was made by Mr. Jefferson, Secretary of State, in pursuance of a resolution of the House of Representatives, passed on the 23d of February, 1791, requiring him "to report to Congress the nature and extent of the privileges and restrictions of the commercial intercourse of the United States with foreign nations, and the measures which he should think proper to be adopted for the improvement of the commerce and navigation of the same."

This report stated the exports of the United States in articles of their own produce and manufacture, at \$19,587,055, and the imports at \$19,823,060.

Of the exports, nearly one-half was carried to the kingdom of Great Britain and its dominions; of the imports, about four-fifths were brought from the same countries. The American shipping amounted to 277,519 tons, of which not quite one-sixth was employed in the trade with Great Britain and its dominions.

In all the nations of Europe, most of the articles produced in the United States were subject to heavy duties, **and** some of them were prohibited. In England, the trade of the United States was in general on as good a footing as the trade of other countries, and several articles were more favored than the same articles, the growth of other countries.

The statements and arguments of this report tended to enforce the policy of making discriminations which might

favor the commerce of the United States with France and discourage that with England, and which might promote the increase of American navigation as a branch of industry and a resource of defense.

This was the last official act of the Secretary of State. Early in the preceding summer he had signified to the President his intention to retire in September from the public service, and had, with some reluctance, consented to postpone the execution of this intention to the close of the year. Retaining his purpose, he resigned his office on the last day of December. He was succeeded by Edmund Randolph, whose place as Attorney-General was supplied by William Bradford, of Pennsylvania.

On the 4th of January (1794), the House resolved itself into a committee of the whole, on the report of the Secretary of State, relative to the restrictions of the commerce of the United States, when Mr. Madison, after some prefatory observations, laid on the table a series of resolutions for the consideration of the members.

These memorable resolutions embraced almost completely the idea of the report. They imposed an additional duty on the manufactures, and on the tonnage of vessels of nations having no commercial treaty with the United States; while they reduced the duties already imposed by law on the tonnage of vessels belonging to nations having such commercial treaty, and they reciprocated the restrictions which were imposed on American navigation.

The resolutions were taken up on the 13th of January (1794), and the consideration of them led to protracted and very animated debates. The friends of the administration regarded Mr. Madison's scheme as directly hostile to England and subservient to the views of France, in a degree utterly inconsistent with the policy of neutrality. On the other hand, the opposition insisted that the proposed

measures were absolutely necessary to protect the commerce of the country from aggression and plunder.

Mr. Madison, in advocating the views which he held, looked especially to measures correspondent to the British navigation act, which had given England the command of the sea. He contended that America would thrive more from exclusion and contest, than from conciliating and stooping to a power that slighted her; and that now was the moment, if ever, when England was engaged in mortal strife with France, to bring her to reason.\*

Mr. Madison's plan was debated at different periods of the session, and underwent considerable modification in its progress through the House, where a resolution was finally adopted retaining the principle of commercial restrictions. It was rejected in the Senate by the casting vote of Mr. Adams, the Vice-President.

Early in January, a resolution was agreed to in the House, declaring "that a naval force, adequate to the protection of the commerce of the United States against the Algerine corsairs, ought to be provided." The force proposed was to consist of six frigates.

This measure was founded on the communications of the President respecting the improbability of being able to negotiate a peace with the Dey of Algiers; and on undoubted information that these pirates had, during their first short cruise in the Atlantic, captured eleven American merchantmen, and made upwards of 100 prisoners, and were preparing to renew their attack on the unprotected vessels of the United States.

\* Madison, on this and other occasions, appears to have been earnestly desirous to build up an extensive mercantile marine, with a view to the formation of an efficient navy. It is pleasant to recollect that, under his administration as President, the proudest triumphs of our navy were achieved.

This bill was strongly opposed, but finally passed both houses, and was approved by the President.

While these debates were going on, the news of the British order in council of the 6th of November (which had not become known to the American minister in England until the close of December, 1793), relative to the French West India trade, arrived in the United States, and roused afresh the hostility against England. Such was the threatening aspect of affairs, that early in the session a committee of the House was instructed to prepare and report an estimate of the expense requisite to place the principal seaports of the country in a state of defense.

That some steps should be taken to resist aggressions on the part of England, was very evident; but the members of Congress differed as to what measures ought to be adopted. The opponents of the administration urged the adoption of commercial restrictions, while its supporters, with the President himself, were in favor of a different course. Various plans were submitted to the House by members, in accordance with their different views of the subject.

On the 12th of March (1794) Mr. Sedgwick moved several resolutions, the objects of which were to raise a military force, and to authorize the President to lay an embargo. The armament was to consist of 15,000 men, who should be brought into actual service in case of war with any European power, but not until war should break out. In the meantime they were to receive pay while assembled for the purpose of discipline, which was not to exceed twenty-four days in each year.

After stating the motives which led to the introduction of these resolutions they were laid on the table for the consideration of the members.

On the 21st of March Mr. Sedgwick's motion, authoriz-

ing the President to lay an embargo, was negatived by a majority of two votes, but in a few days the consideration of that subject was resumed, and a resolution passed prohibiting all trade from the United States to any foreign port or place for thirty days, and empowering the President to carry the resolution into effect.

On the 27th of March Mr. Dayton moved a resolution for sequestering all debts due to British subjects, and for taking means to secure their payment into the treasury, as a fund out of which to indemnify the citizens of the United States for depredations committed on their commerce by British cruisers, in violation of the laws of nations.

The debate on this resolution was such as was to be expected from the irritable state of the public mind. The invectives against the British nation were uttered with peculiar vehemence, and were mingled with allusions to the exertions of the government for the preservation of neutrality, censuring strongly the system which had been pursued.

Before any question was taken on the proposition for sequestering British debts, and without a decision on those proposed by Mr. Madison, Mr. Clarke moved a resolution which in some degree suspended the commercial regulations that had been so earnestly debated. This was to prohibit all intercourse with Great Britain until her government should make full compensation for all injuries done to the citizens of the United States by armed vessels, or by any person or persons acting under the authority of the British King, and until the western posts should be delivered up.

On the 4th of April (1794) before any decision was made on the several propositions which have been stated, the President laid before Congress a letter just received from



Thomas Pinckney, the minister of the United States at London, communicating additional instructions to the commanders of British armed ships, which were dated the 8th of January. These instructions revoked those of the 6th of November (1793), and, instead of bringing in for adjudication all neutral vessels trading with the French islands, British cruisers were directed to bring in those only which were laden with cargoes the produce of the French islands, and were on a direct voyage from those islands to Europe.

The letter detailed a conversation with Lord Grenville on this subject, in which his lordship explained the motives which had originally occasioned the order of the 6th of November, and gave to it a less extensive signification than it had received in the courts of vice-admiralty.

It was intended, he said, to be temporary and was calculated to answer two purposes. One was to prevent the abuses which might take place in consequence of the whole of the St. Domingo fleet having gone to the United States; the other was on account of the attack designed upon the French West India islands by the armament under Sir John Jervis and Sir Charles Grey; but it was now no longer necessary to continue the regulations for those purposes. His lordship added that the order of the 6th of November did not direct the confiscation of all vessels trading with the French islands, but only that they should be brought in for legal adjudication, and he conceived that no vessel would be condemned under it which would not have been previously liable to the same sentence.

The influence of this communication on the party in the Legislature which was denominated Federal was very considerable. Believing that the existing differences between the two nations still admitted of explanation and adjustment, they strenuously opposed all measures which were



irritating in their tendency or which might be construed into a dereliction of the neutral character they were desirous of maintaining, but they gave all their weight to those which, by putting the nation in a posture of defense, prepared it for war should negotiation fail.

On the opposite party no change of sentiment or of views appears to have been produced. Their system seems to have been matured, and not to have originated in the feelings of the moment. They adhered to it, therefore, with inflexible perseverance, but seemed not anxious to press an immediate determination of the propositions which had been made. These propositions were discussed with great animation, but, notwithstanding an ascertained majority in their favor, were permitted to remain undecided, as if their fate depended on some extrinsic circumstance.

Meanwhile, great exertions were made to increase the public agitation and to stimulate the resentments which were felt against Great Britain. The artillery of the press was played with unceasing fury on the minority of the House of Representatives and the democratic societies brought their whole force into operation. Language will scarcely afford terms of greater outrage than were employed against those who sought to stem the torrent of public opinion and to moderate the rage of the moment. They were denounced as a British faction, seeking to impose chains on their countrymen. Even the majority was declared to be but half roused and to show little of that energy and decision which the crisis required.

The proceedings of Congress continued to manifest a fixed purpose to pursue the system which had been commenced, and the public sentiment seemed to accord with that system. That the nation was advancing rapidly to a state of war was firmly believed by many intelligent men,

who doubted the necessity and denied the policy of abandoning the neutral position which had been thus long maintained. In addition to the extensive calamities which must, in any state of things, result to the United States from a rupture with a nation which was the mistress of the ocean, and which furnished the best market for the sale of their produce and the purchase of manufactures of indispensable necessity, there were considerations belonging exclusively to the moment, which, though operating only in a narrow circle, were certainly entitled to great respect.\*

That war with Britain, during the continuance of the passionate and almost idolatrous devotion of a great majority of the people to the French republic, would throw America so completely into the arms of France as to leave her no longer mistress of her own conduct, was not the only fear which the temper of the day suggested. That the spirit which triumphed in that nation and deluged it with the blood of its revolutionary champions might cross the Atlantic, and desolate the hitherto safe and peaceful dwellings of the American people, was an apprehension not so entirely unsupported by appearances as to be pronounced chimerical. With a blind infatuation, which treated reason as a criminal, immense numbers applauded a furious despotism, trampling on every right, and sporting with life as the essence of liberty; and the few who conceived freedom to be a plant which did not flourish the better for being nourished with human blood, and who ventured to disapprove the ravages of the guillotine, were execrated as the tools of the coalesced despots, and as persons who, to weaken the affection of America for France, became the calumniators of that republic. Al-

\* Marshall.

ready had an imitative spirit, captivated with the splendor, but copying the errors, of a great nation, reared up in every part of the continent self-created corresponding societies, who, claiming to be the people, assumed a control over the government and were loosening its bands. Already were the Mountain,\* and a revolutionary tribunal, favorite toasts, and already were principles familiarly proclaimed, which, in France, had been the precursors of that tremendous and savage despotism, which, in the name of the people and by the instrumentality of affiliated societies, had spread its terrific sway over that fine country and had threatened to extirpate all that was wise and virtuous. That a great majority of those statesmen who conducted the opposition would deprecate such a result furnished no security against it. When the physical force of a nation usurps the place of its wisdom, those who have produced such a state of things no longer control it.

These apprehensions, whether well or ill founded, produced in those who felt them an increased solicitude for the preservation of peace. Their aid was not requisite to confirm the judgment of Washington on this interesting subject. Fixed in his purpose of maintaining the neutrality of the United States until the aggressions of a foreign power should clearly render neutrality incompatible with honor, and conceiving from the last advices received from England that the differences between the two nations had not yet attained that point, he determined to make one decisive effort, which should either remove the ostensible causes of quarrel or demonstrate the indisposition of Great Britain to remove them. This determination was executed by the nomination of an envoy extraordinary to his Britan-

\* A well-known term designating the most violent party in France.

nic majesty, which was announced to the Senate on the 16th of April (1794), in the following terms:

“The communications which I have made to you during your present session, from the dispatches of our minister in London, contain a serious aspect of our affairs with Great Britain. But as peace ought to be pursued with unremitted zeal, before the last resource—which has so often been the scourge of nations and cannot fail to check the advanced prosperity of the United States—is contemplated, I have thought proper to nominate and do hereby nominate John Jay as envoy extraordinary of the United States to his Britannic majesty.\*

“My confidence in our minister plenipotentiary in London continues undiminished. But a mission like this, while it corresponds with the solemnity of the occasion, will announce to the world a solicitude for the friendly adjustment of our complaints and a reluctance to hostility. Going immediately from the United States, such an envoy will carry with him a full knowledge of the existing temper and sensibility of our country, and will thus be taught to vindicate our rights with firmness and to cultivate peace with sincerity.”

\* Mr. Jay's secretary on this mission was Col. John Trumbull. Colonel Trumbull may be considered one of the most interesting among the many remarkable characters called into action and developed by our Revolutionary War. All that we know of him tends to raise him in our estimation as a soldier, a gentleman, and an artist. When accidentally, as he thought, but providentially, as the event proved, he was excluded from the army, he deemed it a great misfortune, but it forced upon him the cultivation of his art, and made him the painter of the Revolution. His noble historical paintings are the most precious relics of that heroic age which the nation possesses. They are justly prized above all price; and the latest posterity will rejoice that Trumbull laid down the sword to take up the pallet and pencil.

To those who believed the interests of the nation to require a rupture with England and a still closer connection with France nothing could be more unlooked for or more unwelcome than this decisive measure. That it would influence the proceedings of Congress could not be doubted, and that it would materially affect the public mind was probable. Evincing the opinion of the executive that negotiation, not legislative hostility, was still the proper medium for accommodating differences with Great Britain, it threw on the Legislature a great responsibility, if they should persist in a system calculated to defeat that negotiation. By showing to the people that their President did not yet believe war to be necessary, it turned the attention of many to peace, and, by suggesting the probability, rekindled the almost extinguished desire of preserving that blessing.

Scarcely has any public act of the President drawn upon his administration a greater degree of censure than this. That such would be its effect could not be doubted by a person who had observed the ardor with which opinions that it thwarted were embraced, or the extremity to which the passions and contests of the moment had carried all orders of men. But it is the province of real patriotism to consult the utility more than the popularity of a measure, and to pursue the path of duty, although it may be rugged.

In the Senate the nomination was approved by a majority of ten votes, and, in the House of Representatives, it was urged as an argument against persevering in the system which had been commenced. On the 18th of April a motion for taking up the report of the committee of the whole house on the resolution for cutting off all commercial intercourse with Great Britain was opposed chiefly on the ground that, as an envoy had been nominated to the



court of that country, no obstacle ought to be thrown in his way. The adoption of the resolution would be a bar to negotiation, because it used the language of menace and manifested a partiality to one of the belligerents which was incompatible with neutrality. It was also an objection to the resolution that it prescribed the terms on which alone a treaty should be made, and was, consequently, an infringement of the right of the executive to negotiate, and an indelicacy to that department.

The resolution having undergone some modifications, a bill in conformity with it was brought in and carried by a considerable majority. In the Senate it was lost by the casting vote of Mr. Adams, the Vice-President. The system which had been taken up in the House of Representatives was pressed no further.

A bill for punishing infringements of the neutrality laws and prohibiting the condemnation and sale of prizes in the ports of the United States, brought in by the belligerent powers, was suggested by Washington and reported in the Senate, where it met a violent opposition and was finally passed by the casting vote of the Vice-President. In the House of Representatives it was passed after striking out the provision relative to the sale of prizes. In maintaining his system of strict neutrality Washington had to fight every inch of the ground. The opposition omitted no means of bringing the administration into discredit. Attacks in Congress on the executive officers of the government was resorted to.

In both houses inquiries were set on foot respecting the treasury department, which obviously originated in the hope of finding some foundation for censuring Mr. Hamilton, the secretary, but which failed entirely. In a similar hope, as respected Gouverneur Morris, the minister of the United States at Paris, the Senate passed a vote request-



ing the President to lay before that body his correspondence with the French republic, and also with the Department of State.

As a war with Great Britain seemed inevitable should the mission of Mr. Jay prove unsuccessful, Congress did not adjourn without passing the absolutely necessary laws for putting the country in a state of defense. Provision was made for fortifying the principal harbors, and 80,000 militia were ordered to be in readiness for active service. Arms and munitions of war were allowed to be imported free of duty, and the President was authorized to purchase galleys and lay an embargo if he should deem that the public interest required it. To meet the expenses thus incurred duties were levied on a number of additional articles of importation.

On the 9th of June (1794) this active and stormy session was closed by an adjournment to the first Monday in the succeeding November.

“The public,” says Marshall, “was not less agitated than the Legislature had been by those interesting questions which had occasioned some of the most animated and eloquent discussions that had ever taken place on the floor of the House of Representatives. Mr. Madison’s resolutions especially continued to be the theme of general conversation, and, for a long time, divided parties throughout the United States. The struggle for public opinion was ardent, and each party supported its pretensions, not only with those arguments which each deemed conclusive, but also by those reciprocal criminations which, perhaps, each in part believed.

“The opposition declared that the friends of the administration were an aristocratic and corrupt faction, who, from a desire to introduce monarchy, were hostile to France, and under the influence of Britain; that they sought every occasion to increase expense, to augment

debt, to multiply the public burdens, to create armies and navies, and, by the instrumentality of all this machinery, to govern and enslave the people; that they were a paper nobility, whose extreme sensibility at every measure which threatened the funds, induced a tame submission to injuries and insults, which the interest and the honor of the nation required them to resist.

“The friends of the administration retorted that the opposition was prepared to sacrifice the best interests of their country on the altar of the French revolution; that they were willing to go to war for French, not for American objects; that while they urged war they withheld the means of supporting it in order the more effectually to humble and disgrace the government; that they were so blinded by their passion for France as to confound crimes with meritorious deeds, and to abolish the natural distinction between virtue and vice; that the principles which they propagated and with which they sought to intoxicate the people were, in practice, incompatible with the existence of government; that they were the apostles of anarchy, not of freedom, and were, consequently, not the friends of real and rational liberty.”

Immediately after the adjournment of Congress Washington paid a short visit to Mount Vernon. On the 19th of June he writes from Baltimore to Randolph, Secretary of State, respecting the commission and letters of credence of John Quincy Adams, whom he had recently appointed minister resident to the United Netherlands. From the same place, on the same day, he writes to Gouverneur Morris, who had recently been recalled from France at the request of the revolutionary authorities, he having pretty openly expressed his disapprobation of the excesses of the party in power. Washington had appointed as his successor James Monroe, who, as senator, had uniformly

opposed the measures of the administration. Such an act of magnanimity in these times would excite considerable surprise.

On the 25th of June (1794), after his arrival at Mount Vernon, Washington again writes to Gouverneur Morris, who still retained his warm friendship and confidence. Speaking of his political course, he says: "My primary objects, to which I have steadily adhered, have been to preserve the country in peace if I can, and to be prepared for war if I cannot; to effect the first upon terms consistent with the respect which is due to ourselves and with honor, justice, and good faith to all the world."

On the same day he writes to Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State: "I shall endeavor to be back by the time I allotted before I left Philadelphia, if I am able, but an exertion to save myself and horse from falling among the rocks at the lower falls of the Potomac, whither I went on Sunday morning to see the canal and locks, has wrenched my back in such a manner as to prevent my riding, and hitherto has defeated the purposes for which I came home. My stay here will only be until I can ride with ease and safety, whether I accomplish my own business or not."

In July (1794) Washington returned to Philadelphia, where very weighty matters were demanding his attention.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WASHINGTON QUELLS THE WESTERN INSURRECTION.

1794.

WHILE Congress was in session several important matters had claimed the consideration of Washington, to which we will now call the reader's attention. It will be recollected that a request of the executive for the recall of Mr. Genet had been transmitted to the French government. During the time which elapsed before an answer could be returned Genet's proceedings had been such as to call for all the prudence, foresight, and moderation of Washington.

In that spirit of conciliation which adopts the least irritating means for effecting its objects, Washington had resolved to bear with the insults, the resistance, and the open defiance of Genet until his appeal to the friendship and the policy of the French republic should be fairly tried. Early in January (1794) this resolution was shaken by fresh proofs of the perseverance of that minister in a line of conduct not to be tolerated by a nation which has not surrendered all pretensions to self-government. Genet had meditated and deliberately planned two expeditions, to be carried on from the territories of the United States against the dominions of Spain, and had, as minister of the French republic, granted commissions to citizens of the United States, who were privately recruiting troops for the proposed service. The first was destined against Florida and the second against Louisiana. The detail of the plans had been settled. The pay, rations, clothing, plunder, and divi-

(1847)

sion of the conquered lands to be allotted to the military and the proportion of the acquisitions to be reserved to the republic of France were arranged. The troops destined to act against Florida were to be raised in the three southern States, were to rendezvous in Georgia, were to be aided by a body of Indians, and were to co-operate with the French fleet, should one arrive on the coast. This scheme had been the subject of a correspondence between the executive and Genet, but was in full progress in the preceding December, when, by the vigilance of the Legislature of South Carolina, it was more particularly developed, and some of the principal agents were arrested.

About the same time, intelligence less authentic, but wearing every circumstance of probability, was received, stating that the expedition against Louisiana, which was to be carried on down the Ohio from Kentucky, was in equal maturity.

This intelligence seemed to render a further forbearance incompatible with the dignity of the United States. The question of superseding the diplomatic functions of Genet and depriving him of the privileges attached to that character was brought before the Cabinet, and a message to Congress was prepared, communicating these transactions and avowing a determination to adopt that measure, unless one or the other House should signify the opinion that it was not advisable so to do, when the business was arrested by receiving a letter from Mr. Morris announcing officially the recall of this rash minister.

Mr. Fauchet, the successor of Genet, arrived in February (1794), and brought with him strong assurances that his government totally disapproved the conduct of his predecessor. He avowed a determination to avoid whatever might be offensive to those to whom he was deputed, and a wish to carry into full effect the friendly dispositions

of his nation toward the United States. For some time his actions were in the spirit of these professions.

Not long after the arrival of Mr. Fauchet, the executive government of France requested the recall of Gouverneur Morris. With this request Washington, as we have already seen, immediately complied, and James Monroe was appointed to succeed him.

The discontents which had been long fomented in the western country had assumed a serious and alarming appearance.

A remonstrance to the President and Congress of the United States from the inhabitants of Kentucky, respecting the navigation of the Mississippi, was laid before the executive and each branch of the Legislature. The style of this paper accorded well with the instructions under which it had been prepared. It demanded the free navigation of the Mississippi as a right, and arraigned the government for not having secured its enjoyment. The paper was submitted to both Houses of Congress.

In the Senate the subject was referred to a committee who reported "that in the negotiation now carrying on at at Madrid between the United States and Spain, the right of the former to the free navigation of the Mississippi is well asserted and demonstrated, and their claim to its enjoyment is pursued with all the assiduity and firmness which the magnitude of the subject demands, and will doubtless continue to be so pursued until the object shall be obtained or adverse circumstances shall render the further progress of the negotiation impracticable. That in the present state of the business it would improper for Congress to interfere, but, in order to satisfy the citizens of the United States more immediately interested in the event of this negotiation, that the United States have uniformly asserted their right to the free use of the navigation



of the river Mississippi, and have employed and will continue to pursue such measures as are best adapted to obtain the enjoyment of this important territorial right, the committee recommend that it be resolved by the Senate:

“That the President of the United States be, and he hereby is requested to cause to be communicated to the executive of the State of Kentucky, such part of the existing negotiation between the United States and Spain relative to this subject, as he may deem advisable and consistent with the course of the negotiation.”

In the House of Representatives also a resolution was passed, expressing the conviction of the House, that the executive was urging the claim of the United States to the navigation of the Mississippi in the manner most likely to prove successful.

This answer was not satisfactory to the Kentuckians. Later developments showed that they had a different object from that of obtaining the free navigation of the Mississippi by negotiation.

In October, 1793, it was alleged by the Spanish commissioners that four Frenchmen had left Philadelphia, empowered by the minister of the French republic to prepare an expedition, in Kentucky, against New Orleans. This fact was immediately communicated by Mr. Jefferson to the governor of that State, with a request that he would use those means of prevention which the law enabled him to employ. This letter was accompanied by one from the Secretary of War, conveying the request of the President, that, if preventive means should fail, effectual military force should then be employed to arrest the expedition, and General Wayne was ordered to hold a body of troops at the disposal of the governor should he find the militia insufficient for his purpose.

The governor had already received information that a

citizen of Kentucky was in possession of a commission appointing him Commander-in-Chief of the proposed expedition; and that the Frenchmen alluded to in the letter of Mr. Jefferson had arrived, and, far from affecting concealment, declared that they only waited for money, which they expected soon to receive, in order to commence their operations.

The governor, however, in a letter, containing very singular views of his duty in the affair, declined to interfere with the proposed expedition.

Upon the receipt of this extraordinary letter, Washington directed General Wayne to establish a military post at Fort Massac, on the Ohio, for the purpose of stopping by force, if peaceful means should fail, any body of armed men who should be proceeding down that river.

This precaution appears to have been necessary. The preparations for the expedition were, for some time, carried on with considerable activity; and there is reason to believe that it was not absolutely relinquished until the war ceased between France and Spain.

It will be recollected that, in the preceding year, the attempt to treat with the hostile Indians had suspended the operations of General Wayne until the season for action had nearly passed away. After the total failure of negotiation, the campaign was opened with as much vigor as a prudent attention to circumstances would permit.

The Indians had expected an attempt upon their villages, and had collected in full force, with the apparent determination of risking a battle in their defense. A battle was desired by the American general, but the consequences of another defeat were too serious to warrant him in putting more to hazard by precipitate movements than the circumstances of the war required. The negotiations with the Indians were not terminated till September, and it was

then too late to complete the preparations which would enable General Wayne to accomplish his object. He, therefore, contented himself with collecting his army and penetrating about six miles in advance of Fort Jefferson, where he established himself for the winter in a camp called Greenville. After fortifying his camp, he took possession of the ground on which the Americans had been defeated in 1791, where he erected Fort Recovery. These positions afforded considerable protection to the frontiers, and facilitated the opening of the ensuing campaign.

Seeing only the dark side of every measure adopted by the government, and not disinclined to militia expeditions made at the expense of the United States, the people of Kentucky loudly charged the President with a total disregard of their safety, pronounced the Continental troops entirely useless, declared that the Indians should be kept in awe alone by the militia, and insisted that the power should be deposited with some person in their State to call them out at his discretion, at the charge of the United States.

Meanwhile, some steps were taken by the Governor of Upper Canada, which were well calculated to increase suspicions respecting the dispositions of Great Britain.

It was believed by Washington, not without cause, that the cabinet of London was disposed to avail itself of the nonexecution of that article of the treaty of peace which stipulates for the payment of debts, to justify a permanent detention of the posts on the southern side of the lakes, and to establish a new boundary line, whereby those lakes should be entirely comprehended in Upper Canada. Early in the spring a detachment from the garrison of Detroit repossessed and fortified a position nearly fifty miles south of that station, on the Miami, a river which empties into Lake Erie at its westernmost point.

This movement, and other facts which strengthened the belief that the hostile Indians were at least countenanced by the English, were the subjects of a correspondence between the Secretary of State and Mr. Hammond, in which crimination was answered by recrimination, in which a considerable degree of mutual irritation was displayed, and in which each supported his charges against the nation of the other, much better than he defended his own. It did not, however, in any manner, affect the operations of the army.

The delays inseparable from the transportation of necessary supplies through an uninhabited country, infested by an active enemy peculiarly skilled in partisan war, unavoidably protracted the opening of the campaign until near midsummer. Meanwhile several sharp skirmishes took place, in one of which a few white men were stated to be mingled with the Indians.

On the 8th of August (1794) General Wayne reached the confluence of the Au Glaize, where he threw up some works of defense and protection for magazines. The richest and most extensive settlements of the western Indians lay about this place.

The mouth of the Au Glaize is distant about thirty miles from the post occupied by the British, in the vicinity of which the whole strength of the enemy, amounting, according to intelligence on which General Wayne relied, to rather less than 2,000 men, was collected. The Continental legion was not much inferior in number to the Indians, and a reinforcement of about 1,100 mounted militia from Kentucky, commanded by General Scott, gave a decided superiority of strength to the army of Wayne. That the Indians had determined to give him battle was well understood, and the discipline of his legion, the ardor of all his troops, and the superiority of his numbers, au-

thorized him confidently to expect a favorable issue. Yet, in pursuance of that policy by which the United States had been uniformly actuated, he determined to make one more effort for the attainment of peace without bloodshed. Messengers were dispatched to the several hostile tribes who were assembled in his front, inviting them to appoint deputies to meet him on his march, in order to negotiate a lasting peace.

On the 15th of August (1794) the American army advanced down the Miami, with its right covered by that river, and on the 18th arrived at the rapids. Here they halted on the 19th, in order to erect a temporary work for the protection of the baggage and to reconnoitre the situation of the enemy.

The Indians were advantageously posted behind a thick wood, and behind the British fort.

At 8 in the morning of the 20th the American army advanced in columns, the legion with its right flank covered by the Miami. One brigade of mounted volunteers, commanded by General Todd, was on the left; and the other, under General Barbee, was in the rear. A select battalion, commanded by Major Price, moved in front of the legion, sufficiently in advance to give timely notice for the troops to form in case of action.

After marching about five miles Major Price received a heavy fire from a concealed enemy, and was compelled to retreat.

The Indians had chosen their ground with judgment. They had advanced into the thick wood in front of the British works, which extends several miles west from the Miami, and had taken a position rendered almost inaccessible to horse by a quantity of fallen timber which appeared to have been blown up in a tornado. They were formed in three lines, within supporting distance of each



other; and, as is their custom, with a very extended front. Their line stretched to the west, at right angles with the river, about two miles, and their immediate effort was to turn the left flank of the American army.

On the discharge of the first rifle, the legion was formed in two lines, and the front was ordered to advance with trailed arms and rouse the enemy from his covert at the point of the bayonet; then, and not until then, to deliver a fire, and to press the fugitives too closely to allow them time to load after discharging their pieces. Soon perceiving the strength of the enemy in front, and that he was endeavoring to turn the American left, the general ordered the second line to support the first. The legion cavalry, led by Captain Campbell, was directed to penetrate between the Indians and the river, where the wood was less thick and entangled, in order to charge their left flank; and General Scott, at the head of the mounted volunteers, was directed to make a considerable circuit, and to turn their right flank.

These orders were executed with spirit and promptitude, but such was the impetuosity of the charge made by the first line of infantry, so entirely was the enemy broken by it, and so rapid was the pursuit that only a small part of the second line and of the mounted volunteers could get into action. In the course of one hour the Indians were driven more than two miles through thick woods, when the pursuit terminated within gunshot of the British fort.

General Wayne remained three days on the banks of the Miami, in front of the field of battle, during which time the houses and cornfields above and below the fort, some of them within pistol-shot of it, were reduced to ashes. In the course of these operations a correspondence took place between General Wayne and Major Campbell, the commandant of the fort, which is stated by the former in such



a manner as to show that hostilities between them were avoided only by the prudent acquiescence of the latter in this devastation of property within the range of his guns.

On the 28th (August, 1794), the army returned to Au Glaize by easy marches, destroying on its route all the villages and corn within fifty miles of the river.

In this decisive battle the loss of the Americans in killed and wounded, amounted to 107, including officers. Among the dead were Captain Campbell, who commanded the cavalry, and Lieutenant Towles of the infantry, both of whom fell in the first charge. General Wayne bestowed great and well-merited praise on the courage and alacrity displayed by every part of the army.

The hostility of the Indians still continuing, their whole country was laid waste, and forts were erected in the heart of their settlements to prevent their return.

This seasonable victory rescued the United States from a general war with all the Indians northwest of the Ohio. The Six Nations had discovered a restless, uneasy temper, and the interposition of the President to prevent a settlement which Pennsylvania was about to make at Presque Isle seemed rather to suspend the commencement of hostilities than to establish permanent pacific dispositions among those tribes. The battle of the 20th of August, however, had an immediate effect, and the clouds which had been long gathering in that quarter were instantly dissipated.

In the South, too, its influence was felt. In that quarter the inhabitants of Georgia and the Indians seemed equally disposed to war. Scarcely was the feeble authority of the government competent to restrain the aggressions of the former, or the dread of its force sufficient to repress those of the latter. In this doubtful state of things, the effect of a victory could not be inconsiderable.

About this time the seditions and violent resistance to the execution of the law imposing duties on spirits distilled within the United States had advanced to a point in the counties of Pennsylvania lying west of the Alleghany mountains, which required the decisive interposition of government.

The laws being openly set at defiance, Washington determined to test their efficiency. Bills of indictment were found against the perpetrators of certain outrages, and process was issued against them and placed in the hands of the United States marshal for execution.

The marshal repaired in person to the country which was the scene of disorder for the purpose of serving the processes. On the 15th of July (1794), while in the execution of his duty, he was beset on the road by a body of armed men, who fired on him, but fortunately did him no personal injury. At daybreak the ensuing morning a party attacked the house of General Nevil, the inspector, but he defended himself resolutely and obliged the assailants to retreat.

Knowing well that this attack had been preconcerted, and apprehending that it would be repeated, he applied to the militia officers and magistrates of the county for protection. The answer was that, "owing to the too general combination of the people to oppose the revenue system, the laws could not be executed so as to afford him protection; that should the *posse comitatus* be ordered out to support the civil authority they would favor the party of the rioters."

On the succeeding day the insurgents reassembled to the number of about 500 to renew their attack on the house of the inspector. That officer, finding that no protection could be afforded by the civil authority, had applied to the commanding officer at Fort Pitt, and had obtained a de-

tachment of eleven men from that garrison, who were joined by Major Kirkpatrick. Successful resistance to so great a force being obviously impracticable, a parley took place, at which the assailants, after requiring that the inspector and all his papers should be delivered up, demanded that the party in the house should march out and ground their arms. This being refused, the parley terminated and the assault commenced. The action lasted until the assailants set fire to several adjacent buildings, the heat from which was so intense that the house could no longer be occupied. From this cause, and from the apprehension that the fire would soon be communicated to the main building, Major Kirkpatrick and his party surrendered themselves.

The marshal and Col. Pressly Nevil were seized on their way to General Nevil's house and detained until 2 the next morning. The marshal especially was treated with extreme severity. His life was frequently threatened, and was probably saved by the interposition of some leading individuals, who possessed more humanity or more prudence than those with whom they were associated. He could obtain his liberty only by entering into a solemn engagement, which was guaranteed by Colonel Nevil, to serve no more processes on the western side of the Alleghany mountains.

The marshal and inspector having both retired to Pittsburg, the insurgents deputed two of their body, one of whom was a justice of the peace, to demand that the former should surrender all his authority, and that the latter should resign his office, threatening, in case of refusal, to attack the place and seize their persons. These demands were not acceded to, but Pittsburg affording no security, these officers escaped from the danger which threatened them by descending the Ohio; after which they found

their way, by a circuitous route, to the seat of government.

The rioters next proceeded to intercept the mail and take out letters from certain parties in Pittsburg, containing expressions of disapproval of their proceedings. The writers of these letters they caused to be banished. They next held meetings on Braddock's Field and at Parkinson's Ferry, at which the determination to resist the laws by force of arms was openly avowed.

Affidavits attesting this serious state of things were laid before Washington.

Affairs had now reached a point which seemed to forbid the continuance of a temporizing system. The efforts at conciliation, which, for more than three years, the government had persisted to make, and the alterations repeatedly introduced into the act for the purpose of rendering it less exceptionable, instead of diminishing the arrogance of those who opposed their will to the sense of the nation, had drawn forth sentiments indicative of designs much deeper than the evasion of a single act. The execution of the laws had at length been resisted by open force, and a determination to persevere in these measures was unequivocally avowed. The alternative of subduing this resistance or of submitting to it was presented to the government.

The act of Congress which provided for calling forth the militia "to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions" required, as a prerequisite to the exercise of this power, "that an associate justice, or the judge of the district, should certify that the laws of the United States were opposed, or their execution obstructed, by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the powers vested in the marshals." In the same act it was provided, "that if the militia of the State where such combinations

may happen shall refuse, or be insufficient, to suppress the same, the President may employ the militia of other States."

The evidence which had been transmitted to Washington was laid before one of the associate justices, who gave the certificate, which enabled the chief magistrate to employ the militia in aid of the civil power.

Washington now called a cabinet to consider the subject, and the Governor of Pennsylvania was also consulted respecting it. Randolph, the Secretary of State, and the Governor of Pennsylvania urged reasons against coercion by force of arms; Hamilton, Knox, and Bradford were in favor of employing military force.

These members of the Cabinet were also of opinion that policy and humanity equally dictated the employment of a force which would render resistance desperate. The insurgent country contained 16,000 men able to bear arms, and the computation was that they could bring 7,000 into the field. If the army of the government should amount to 12,000 men, it would present an imposing force which the insurgents would not venture to meet.

It was impossible that Washington could hesitate to embrace the latter of these opinions. That a government intrusted to him should be trampled under foot by a lawless section of the Union, which set at defiance the will of the nation, as expressed by its representatives, was an abasement to which neither his judgment nor his feelings could submit. He resolved, therefore, to issue the proclamation which, by law, was to precede the employment of force.

On the same day a requisition was made on the Governors of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia for their several quotas of militia to compose an army of 12,000 men, who were to be immediately organized and



prepared to march at a minute's warning. The force was ultimately increased to 15,000.

While steps were taking to bring this force into the field, a last essay was made to render its employment unnecessary. Three distinguished and popular citizens of Pennsylvania were deputed by the government to be the bearers of a general amnesty for past offenses, on the sole condition of future obedience to the laws.

It having been deemed advisable that the executive of the State should act in concert with that of the United States, Governor Mifflin also issued a proclamation and appointed commissioners to act with those of the general government.

These commissioners were met by a committee from the convention at Parkinson's Ferry, and the conference resulted in a reference of the offer of amnesty to the people. This reference only served to demonstrate that, while a few persons were disposed to submit to the laws, the masses in the disturbed districts were determined to obstruct the re-establishment of civil authority.

On the 25th of September (1794), Washington issued a proclamation describing in terms of great energy the obstinate and perverse spirit with which the lenient propositions of the government had been received, and declaring his fixed determination, in obedience to the high and irresistible duty consigned to him by the constitution, "to take care that the laws be faithfully executed," to reduce the refractory to obedience.

The troops of New Jersey and Pennsylvania were directed to rendezvous at Bedford, and those of Maryland and Virginia at Cumberland, on the Potomac. The command of the expedition had been conferred on Governor Lee, of Virginia, and the Governors of New Jersey and



Pennsylvania commanded the militia of their respective States under him.

Washington in person visited each division of the army, but, being confident that the force employed must look down all resistance, he left Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, to accompany it, and returned himself to Philadelphia, where the approaching session of Congress required his presence.\*

From Cumberland and Bedford the army marched in two divisions into the country of the insurgents. The greatness of the force prevented the effusion of blood. The disaffected did not venture to assemble in arms. Several of the leaders, who had refused to give assurances of future submission to the laws, were seized, and some of them detained for legal prosecution.

But although no direct and open opposition was made, the spirit of insurrection was not subdued. A sour and malignant temper displayed itself, which indicated but too plainly that the disposition to resist had only sunk under the pressure of the great military force brought into the country, but would rise again should that force be withdrawn. It was, therefore, thought advisable to station for the winter a detachment, to be commanded by Major-General Morgan, in the center of the disaffected country.

"Thus," says Marshall, "without shedding blood, did the prudent vigor of the executive terminate an insurrection which, at one time, threatened to shake the government of the United States to its foundation. That so perverse a spirit should have been excited in the bosom of

\* General Knox, the Secretary of War, accompanied the army to the expected scene of action. The command in chief was confided to Gen. Henry Lee, Washington's old friend and companion in the Revolutionary War. He was at this time Governor of Virginia.

prosperity, without the pressure of a single grievance, is among those political phenomena which occur not unfrequently in the course of human affairs, and which the statesman can never safely disregard. When real ills are felt there is something positive and perceptible to which the judgment may be directed, the actual extent of which may be ascertained and the cause of which may be discerned. But when the mind, inflamed by suppositious dangers, gives full play to the imagination, and fastens upon some object with which to disturb itself, the belief that the danger exists seems to become a matter of faith, with which reason combats in vain."

Washington's own view of the insurrection and its causes is contained in a letter to John Jay, then on his mission to England. "As you have been," he writes, "and will continue to be fully informed by the Secretary of State of all transactions of a public nature which relate to, or may have an influence on, the points of your mission, it would be unnecessary for me to touch upon any of them in this letter were it not for the presumption that the insurrection in the western counties of this State has excited much speculation and a variety of opinions abroad, and will be represented differently, according to the wishes of some and the prejudices of others, who may exhibit, as an evidence of what has been predicted, 'that we are unable to govern ourselves.' Under this view of the subject, I am happy in giving it to you as the general opinion that this event having happened at the time it did was fortunate, although it will be attended with considerable expense.

"That the self-created societies which have spread themselves over this country have been laboring incessantly to sow the seeds of distrust, jealousy, and, of course, discontent, thereby hoping to effect some revolution in the government, is not unknown to you. That they have been the

fomenters of the western disturbances admits of no doubt in the mind of anyone who will examine their conduct, but, fortunately, they precipitated a crisis for which they were not prepared, and thereby have unfolded views which will, I trust, effectuate their annihilation sooner than it might otherwise have happened, at the same time that it has afforded an occasion for the people of this country to show their abhorrence of the result and their attachment to the constitution and the laws; for I believe that five times the number of militia that was required would have come forward, if it had been necessary, to support them.

“The spirit which blazed out on this occasion, as soon as the object was fully understood, and the lenient measures of the government were made known to the people, deserves to be communicated. There are instances of general officers going at the head of a single troop and of light companies; of field officers, when they came to the place of rendezvous and found no command for them in that grade, turning into the ranks and proceeding as private soldiers, under their own captains; and of numbers, possessing the first fortunes in the country, standing in the ranks as private men, and marching day by day with their knapsacks and haversacks at their backs, sleeping on straw, with a single blanket, in a soldier’s tent, during the frosty nights which we have had, by way of example to others. Nay, more; many young Quakers of the first families, character, and property, not discouraged by the elders, have turned into the ranks and are marching with the troops.

“These things have terrified the insurgents, who had no conception that such a spirit prevailed, but, while the thunder only rumbled at a distance, were boasting of their strength and wishing for and threatening the militia by turns, intimating that the arms they should take from them

would soon become a magazine in their hands. Their language is much changed, indeed, but their principles want correction.

“I shall be more prolix in my speech to Congress on the commencement and progress of this insurrection than is usual in such an instrument, or than I should have been on any other occasion, but as numbers at home and abroad will hear of the insurrection, and will read the speech, that may know nothing of the documents to which it might refer, I conceived it would be better to encounter the charge of prolixity by giving a cursory detail of facts, that would show the prominent features of the thing, than to let it go naked into the world, to be dressed up according to the fancy or inclination of the readers or the policy of our enemies.”

Sentiments similar to these were expressed in a letter to Washington's old and intimate friend, Edmund Pendleton. “The successes of our army to the westward,” he writes, “have already been productive of good consequences. They have dispelled a cloud which lowered very heavily in the northern hemisphere (the Six Nations), and, though we have received no direct advices from General Wayne since November, there is reason to believe that the Indians with whom we are or were at war in that quarter, together with their abettors,\* begin to see things in a different point of view.”

One of the most important effects of the suppression of the western rebellion was the fatal blow it gave to the democratic societies founded by Genet. Washington's opinion of these societies is thus expressed in a letter to one of his friends: “The real people, occasionally assembled in order to express their sentiments on political sub-

\*The British on the border.

jects, ought never to be confounded with permanent self-appointed societies, usurping the right to control the constituted authorities and to dictate to public opinion. While the former is entitled to respect, the latter is incompatible with all government and must either sink into general disesteem or finally overturn the established order of things."

## CHAPTER IX.

### WASHINGTON SIGNS JAY'S TREATY.

1794-1795.

CONGRESS had adjourned to meet on the 4th of November (1794), but a quorum of the Senate was not present until the 10th. Washington addressed both Houses of Congress in a longer speech than usual, giving, according to the intention he had expressed in his letter to Mr. Jay, already quoted, a particular view of the insurrection in Pennsylvania, and the measures which he had taken in order to suppress it.

As Commander-in-Chief of the militia when called into actual service, he had, he said, visited the places of general rendezvous, to obtain more correct information and to direct a plan for ulterior movements. Had there been reason for supposing that the laws were secure from obstruction, "he should have caught with avidity at the opportunity of restoring the militia to their families and homes. But succeeding intelligence had tended to manifest the necessity of what had been done, it being now confessed by those who were not inclined to exaggerate the ill conduct of the insurgents, that their malevolence was not pointed merely to a particular law, but that a spirit inimical to all order had actuated many of the offenders.

After bestowing a high encomium on the alacrity and promptitude with which persons in every station had come forward to assert the dignity of the laws, thereby furnishing an additional proof that they understood the true prin-



ciples of government and liberty, and felt the value of their inseparable union, he added :

“To every description indeed of citizens let praise be given. But let them persevere in their affectionate vigilance over that precious depository of American happiness — the constitution of the United States. And when, in the calm moments of reflection, they shall have retraced the origin and progress of the insurrection, let them determine whether it has not been fomented by combinations of men, who — careless of consequences and disregarding the unerring truth that those who rouse cannot always appease a civil convulsion — have disseminated, from an ignorance or perversion of facts, suspicions, jealousies, and accusations of the whole government.”

Washington could not omit this fair occasion once more to press on Congress a subject which had always been near his heart. After mentioning the defectiveness of the existing system, he said :

“The devising and establishing a well-regulated militia would be a general source of legislative honor and a perfect title to public gratitude. I therefore entertain a hope that the present session will not pass without carrying to its full energy the power of organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia, and thus providing, in the language of the constitution, for calling them forth to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions.”

After mentioning the intelligence from the army under the command of General Wayne and the state of Indian affairs, he again called the attention of the House of Representatives to a subject scarcely less interesting than a system of defense against external and internal violence.

“The time,” he said, “which has elapsed since the commencement of our fiscal measures has developed our pe-

cuniary resources so as to open the way for a definitive plan for the redemption of the public debt. It is believed that the result is such as to encourage Congress to consummate this work without delay. Nothing can more promote the permanent welfare of the Union, and nothing would be more grateful to our constituents. Indeed, whatever is unfinished of our system of public credit cannot be benefited by procrastination, and, as far as may be practicable, we ought to place that credit on grounds which cannot be disturbed, and to prevent that progressive accumulation of debt which must ultimately endanger all governments."

In alluding to the intercourse of the United States with foreign nations, he said: "It may not be unseasonable to announce that my policy in our foreign transactions has been to cultivate peace with all the world; to observe treaties with pure and inviolate faith; to check every deviation from the line of impartiality; to explain what may have been misapprehended, and correct what may have been injurious to any nation, and having thus acquired the right, to lose no time in acquiring the ability to insist upon justice being done to ourselves."

In the Senate an answer was reported which contained the following clause:

"Our anxiety, arising from the licentious and open resistance to the laws in the western counties of Pennsylvania, has been increased by the proceedings of certain self-created societies relative to the laws and administration of the government, proceedings in our apprehension, founded in political error, calculated, if not intended, to disorganize our government, and which, by inspiring delusive hopes of support, have been instrumental in misleading our fellow-citizens in the scene of insurrection."

The address proceeded to express the most decided ap-

probation of the conduct of Washington in relation to the insurgents, and, after noticing the different parts of the speech, concluded with saying:

“At a period so momentous in the affairs of nations the temperate, just, and firm policy that you have pursued in respect to foreign powers, has been eminently calculated to promote the great and essential interest of our country, and has created the fairest title to the public gratitude and thanks.”

To this unequivocal approbation of the policy adopted by the executive with regard to foreign nations, no objections were made. The clause respecting democratic societies was seriously opposed, but the party in favor of the administration had been strengthened in the Senate by recent events, and the address reported by the committee was agreed to without alteration.

In the House, Mr. Madison, Mr. Sedgwick, and Mr. Scott were the committee to report an answer to the speech of the President. It was silent, not only with respect to the self-created societies, but also as to the success of General Wayne, and the foreign policy of Washington. His interference with a favorite system of commercial restrictions was not forgotten, and the mission of John Jay still rankled in the memory of the republicans. No direct censure of the societies or approbation of the foreign policy of the President could be carried, and after an animated debate the opposition party triumphed in the House.

This triumph over the administration revived for a moment the drooping energies of these turbulent societies, but it was only for a moment. The agency ascribed to them by the opinion of the public as well as of the President, in producing an insurrection which was generally execrated, had essentially affected them, and while languishing under this wound they received a deadly blow

from a quarter whence hostility was least expected. The remnant of the French convention, rendered desperate by the ferocious despotism of the Jacobins, and of the sanguinary tyrant who had become their chief, had at length sought for safety by confronting danger, and, succeeding in a desperate attempt to bring Robespierre to the guillotine, had terminated the reign of terror. The colossal powers of the clubs fell with that of their favorite member, and they sunk into long-merited disgrace. Not more certain is it that the boldest streams must disappear, if the fountain that fed them be emptied, than was the dissolution of the democratic societies in America, when the Jacobin clubs were denounced in France. As if their destinies depended on the same thread the political death of the former was the unerring signal for that of the latter.\*

Notwithstanding the disagreement between the executive and one branch of the Legislature concerning self-created societies, and the policy observed toward foreign nations, the speech of the President was treated with marked respect, and the several subjects which it recommended engaged the immediate attention of Congress. A bill was passed authorizing the President to station a detachment of militia in the four western counties of Pennsylvania; provision was made to compensate those whose property had been destroyed by the insurgents, should those who had committed the injury be unable to repair it, and an appropriation exceeding \$1,100,000 was made to defray the expenses occasioned by the insurrection.

Many of the difficulties which had occurred in drawing out the militia were removed, and a bill was introduced to give greater energy to the militia system generally, but this subject possessed so many intrinsic difficulties that

\* Marshall.

the session passed away without effecting anything respecting it.

A bill for the gradual redemption of the national debt was more successful. The President had repeatedly and earnestly recommended to the Legislature the adoption of measures which might effect this favorite object, but, although that party, which had been reproached with a desire to accumulate debt as a means of subverting the republican system, had uniformly manifested a disposition to carry this recommendation into effect, their desire had hitherto been opposed by obstacles they were unable to surmount. The party in opposition to the government, while professing always a desire to reduce the debt took good care to oppose in detail every proposition having this object in view. While the subject was under discussion Colonel Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, addressed a letter to the House of Representatives, through their speaker, informing them that he had digested and prepared a plan on the basis of the actual revenues, for the further support of public credit, which he was ready to communicate. This comprehensive and valuable report was the last official act of Hamilton.

The penurious provision made for those who filled the high executive departments in the American government, excluded from a long continuance in office all those whose fortunes were moderate and whose professional talents placed a decent independence within their reach. While slandered as the accumulator of thousands by illicit means, Hamilton had wasted in the public service great part of the property acquired by his previous labors, and had found himself compelled to decide on retiring from his political station. The accusations brought against him in the last session of the second Congress had postponed the execution of this design until opportunity should be afforded





JOHN MARSHALL.  
*Chief Justice of the United States.*





for a more full investigation of his official conduct, but he informed Washington that, on the close of the session to meet in December, 1793, he should resign his situation in the administration. The events which accumulated about that time, and which were, he said, in a letter to Washington, of a nature to render the continuance of peace in a considerable degree precarious, deferred his meditated retreat. "I do not perceive," he added, "that I could voluntarily quit my post at such a juncture, consistently with considerations either of duty or character, and, therefore, I find myself reluctantly obliged to defer the offer of my resignation.

"But if any circumstances should have taken place in consequence of the intimation of an intention to resign, or should otherwise exist, which serve to render my continuance in office in any degree inconvenient or ineligible, I beg to leave to assure you, sir, that I should yield to them with all the readiness naturally inspired by an impatient desire to relinquish a situation in which even a momentary stay is opposed by the strongest personal and family reasons, and could only be produced by a sense of duty or reputation."

Assurances being given by Washington of the pleasure with which the intelligence that he would continue at his post through the crisis was received; he remained in office until the commencement of the ensuing year. Immediately on his return from the western country, the dangers of domestic insurrection or foreign war having subsided, he gave notice that he should on the last day of January (1795) give in his resignation.

In the esteem and good opinion of Washington, to whom he was best known, Hamilton at all times maintained a high place. While deciding on the mission to England and searching for a person to whom the interesting nego-

tiation with that government should be confided, the mind of the chief magistrate was directed, among others, to him. He carried with him out of office the same cordial esteem for his character and respect for his talents which had induced his appointment.

The vacant office of Secretary of the Treasury was filled by Oliver Wolcott, of Connecticut, a gentleman of sound judgment, who was well versed in its duties. He had served as Comptroller for a considerable time, and in that situation had been eminently useful to the head of the department.

The bill for the gradual reduction of the public debt, on the basis of Hamilton's plan, was resisted in detail through nearly the whole session of Congress, but by the persevering exertions of the Federal party was finally carried, and the system inaugurated by Hamilton became a permanent portion of the financial policy of the country.

On the 3d of March (1795) this important session was ended. Although the party hostile to the administration had obtained a small majority in one branch of the Legislature several circumstances had concurred to give great weight to the recommendations of Washington. Among these may be reckoned the victory obtained by General Wayne and the suppression of the western insurrection. In some points, however, which he had pressed with earnestness, his sentiments did not prevail. One of these was a bill introduced into the Senate for preserving peace with the Indians, by protecting them from the intrusions and incursions of the whites.

General Knox, Secretary of War, like Hamilton, was driven from the service of his country by the scantiness of the compensation allowed him. He resigned at the close of the year 1794. Colonel Pickering, a gentleman who had filled many important offices through the war of the Revo-

lution, who had discharged several trusts of considerable confidence under the present government, and who at the time was Postmaster-General, was appointed to succeed him.

After the rising of Congress, Washington made a short visit to Mount Vernon. He returned to Philadelphia about the 1st of May. Meantime, on the 7th of March (1795) the treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation between the United States and Great Britain, which had been signed by the ministers of the two nations on the 19th of the preceding November, was received.

From his arrival in London, on the 15th of June, 1794, Mr. Jay had been assiduously and unremittingly employed on the arduous duties of his mission. By a deportment respectful, yet firm, mingling a decent deference for the government to which he was deputed with a proper regard, for the dignity of his own, this minister avoided those little asperities which frequently embarrass measures of great concern, and smoothed the way to the adoption of those which were suggested by the real interests of both nations. Many and intricate were the points to be discussed. On some of them an agreement was found to be impracticable, but at length a treaty was concluded, which Mr. Jay declared to be the best that was attainable, and which he believed it for the interests of the United States to accept. Indeed it was scarcely possible to contemplate the evidences of extreme exasperation which were given in America, and the nature of the differences which subsisted between the two countries, without feeling a conviction that war was inevitable, should this attempt to adjust those differences prove unsuccessful.

The constitution had provided that all treaties should be ratified by the Senate, and Washington summoned that body to meet on Monday, the 8th of June, in order to take

it into consideration. In the meantime Washington devoted himself to the task of examining its provisions with the utmost care. It was not, in all respects, what he had wished and expected. Many points were omitted which he had desired to be introduced and settled, others were arranged so as to leave room for future misunderstandings between the two nations. But he felt satisfied that Mr. Jay had obtained the best terms in his power, and that this treaty was the best that could have been made under all circumstances. Important privileges were secured, no great national advantages had been sacrificed, nothing detrimental to the national honor had been admitted, and peace was maintained. That the rejection of the treaty would be followed by a calamitous war did not admit of a doubt. In the existing state of Europe a war with Great Britain would have involved the United States in the long-continued agitations of Europe and deprive them of all the advantages of neutrality and undisturbed commerce. Fully aware of all these considerations, Washington determined that if the Senate should ratify the treaty he would give it the sanction of his signature.

On Monday, the 8th of June (1795), the Senate, in conformity with the summons of the President, convened in the Senate chamber, and the treaty, with the documents connected with it, were submitted to their consideration.

On the 24th of June, after a minute and laborious investigation, the Senate, by precisely a constitutional majority, advised and consented to its conditional ratification.

An insuperable objection existed to an article regulating the intercourse with the British West Indies, founded on a fact which is understood to have been unknown to Mr. Jay. The intention of the contracting parties was to admit the direct intercourse between the United States and those islands, but not to permit the productions of the latter to

be carried to Europe in the vessels of the former. To give effect to the intention, the exportation from the United States of those articles which were the principal productions of the islands was to be relinquished. Among these were cotton. This article, which a few years before was scarcely raised in sufficient quantity for domestic consumption, was becoming one of the richest staples of the southern States. The Senate, being informed of this act, advised and consented that the treaty should be ratified on condition that an article be added thereto, suspending that part of the twelfth article which related to the intercourse with the West Indies.

This resolution of the Senate presented difficulties which required consideration. Whether they could advise and consent to an article which had not been laid before them, and whether their resolution was to be considered as the final exercise of their power, were questions not entirely free from difficulty. Nor was it absolutely clear that the executive could ratify the treaty, under the advice of the Senate, until the suspending article should be introduced into it. A few days were employed in the removal of these doubts, at the expiration of which, intelligence was received from Europe which suspended the resolution the President had formed.

The English newspapers reported that the British government had renewed the order in council for seizing provisions in neutral vessels bound to French ports. Washington directed the Secretary of State to prepare a strong memorial to the British government against this order, and postponed the signing of the treaty until it should be ready. In the meantime his private affairs required that he should visit Mount Vernon, for which place he set off about the middle of July (1795).

Meanwhile, one of the Virginia senators, S. T. Mason,



in violation of the obligation of secrecy and the evident demands of propriety, sent a copy of the treaty to the "Aurora," a violent partisan paper in Philadelphia. On the 2d of July it was published and spread before the community without the authority of the executive, and without any of the official documents and correspondence necessary to a fair appreciation and understanding of its various provisions.

If, in the existing state of parties and the embittered feelings which widely prevailed, the mission of Jay was censured, and the result of his labors condemned in advance, before it was known at all what the treaty contained, the reader can imagine what an effect must have been produced by the publication of the treaty in this clandestine manner. Great Britain was hated and reviled, and France was almost adored by a large and powerful party in the United States, and there were numbers ready, in their blind political fury and excitement, to sacrifice everything rather than be on any terms of concord with the mother country, and rather than moderate in any degree their passionate devotion to France.

In the populous cities meetings of the people were immediately summoned, in order to take into consideration and to express their opinions respecting the treaty. It may well be supposed that persons feeling some distrust of their capacity to form a correct judgment on a subject so complex, would be unwilling to make so hasty a decision, and consequently be disinclined to attend such meetings. Many intelligent men stood aloof, while the most intemperate assumed, as usual, the name of the people — pronounced a definitive and unqualified condemnation of every article in the treaty, and, with the utmost confidence, assigned reasons for their opinions which, in many instances, had only an imaginary existence, and in some were obvi-

ously founded on the strong prejudices which were entertained with respect to foreign powers. It is difficult to review the various resolutions and addresses to which the occasion gave birth without feeling some degree of astonishment, mingled with humiliation, at perceiving such proofs of the fallibility of human reason.

The first meeting was held in Boston. The example of that city was soon followed by New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston, and, as if their addresses were designed at least as much for their fellow-citizens as for their President, while one copy was transmitted to him another was committed to the press. The precedent set by these large cities was followed with wonderful rapidity throughout the Union, and the spirit in which this system of opposition originated sustained no diminution of violence in its progress. The party which supported the administration, however, were not idle; they held meetings and sent addresses to Washington, approving his principles of neutrality and peace.

On the 18th of July (1795), at Baltimore, on his way to Mount Vernon, the President received the resolutions passed by the meeting at Boston, which were inclosed to him in a letter from the selectmen of that town. The answer to this letter and to these resolutions, given in a subsequent page, evinced the firmness with which he had resolved to meet the effort that was obviously making to control the exercise of his constitutional functions, by giving a promptness and vigor to the expression of the sentiments of a party which might impose it upon the world as the deliberate judgment of the public.

Addresses to Washington, and resolutions of town and country meetings were not the only means which were employed to enlist the American people against the measure which had been advised by the Senate. In an immense

number of essays, the treaty was critically examined and every argument which might operate on the judgment or prejudice of the public was urged in the warm and glowing language of passion. To meet these efforts by counter efforts was deemed indispensably necessary by the friends of that instrument, and the gazettes of the day are replete with appeals to the passions and to the reason of those who are the ultimate arbiters of every political question. That the treaty affected the interests of France not less than those of the United States, was, in this memorable controversy, asserted by the one party with as much zeal as it was denied by the other. These agitations furnished matter to Washington for deep reflection and for serious regret, but they appear not to have shaken the decision he had formed or to have affected his conduct otherwise than to induce a still greater degree of circumspection in the mode of transacting the delicate business before him. On their first appearance, therefore, he resolved to hasten his return to Philadelphia, for the purpose of considering at that place, rather than at Mount Vernon, the memorial against the provision order and the conditional ratification of the treaty.

The following confidential letters are extremely interesting, as evincing the precise state of Washington's mind at this momentous and exciting period :

*" To Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State.*

*" Private.*

*" MOUNT VERNON, July 29, 1795.*

" MY DEAR SIR.—Your private letters of the 24th and 25th instant have been received, and you will learn by the official letter of this date my determination of returning to Philadelphia after Monday, if nothing in the interim casts up to render it unnecessary.

“I am excited to this resolution by the violent and extraordinary proceedings which have and are about taking place in the northern parts of the Union, and may be expected in the southern; because I think that the Memorial, the Ratification, and the Instructions, which are framing, are of such vast magnitude as not only to require great individual consideration, but a solemn conjunct revision. The latter could not take place if you were to come here, nor would there be that source of information which is to be found at, and is continually flowing to, the seat of government; and, besides, in the course of deliberation on these great objects, the examination of official papers may more than probably be found essential, which could be resorted to at no other place than Philadelphia.

“To leave home so soon will be inconvenient. A month hence it would have been otherwise; and it was, as I hinted to you before I left the city, in contemplation by me for the purpose of Mrs. Washington’s remaining here till November, when I intended to come back for her. But whilst I am in office I shall never suffer private convenience to interfere with what I conceive to be my official duty.

“I view the opposition which the treaty is receiving from the meetings in different parts of the Union in a very serious light, not because there is more weight in any of the objections which are made to it than was foreseen at first, for there is none in some of them and gross misrepresentations in others, nor as it respects myself personally, for this shall have no influence on my conduct—plainly perceiving, and I am accordingly preparing my mind for it, the obloquy which disappointment and malice are collecting to heap upon me. But I am alarmed at the effect it may have on and the advantage the French government may be disposed to take of the spirit which is at work to cherish a belief in them, that the treaty is calculated to

favor Great Britain at their expense. Whether they believe or disbelieve these tales, the effect it will have upon the nation will be nearly the same; for, whilst they are at war with that power, or so long as the animosity between the two nations exists, it will, no matter at whose expense, be their policy, and it is to be feared will be their conduct, to prevent us from being on good terms with Great Britain, or her from deriving any advantages from our trade, which they can hinder, however much we may be benefited thereby ourselves. To what length this policy and interest may carry them is problematical, but, when they see the people of this country divided, and such a violent opposition given to the measures of their own government, pretendedly in their favor, it may be extremely embarrassing, to say no more of it.

“To sum the whole up in a few words, I have never, since I have been in the administration of the government, seen a crisis which in my judgment has been so pregnant with interesting events, nor one from which more is to be apprehended, whether viewed on one side or the other. From New York there is, and I am told will further be, a counter current, but how formidable it may appear, I know not. If the same does not take place at Boston and other towns, it will afford but too strong evidence that the opposition is in a manner universal, and would make the ratification a very serious business indeed. But, as it respects the French, even counter resolutions would, for the reasons I have already mentioned, do little more than weaken, in a small degree, the effect the other side would have.

“I have written, and do now inclose the letter, the draught of which was approved by the heads of departments, to the selectmen of the town of Boston; but if new lights have been had upon the subject, since it was agreed

to, or if upon reconsideration any alteration should be deemed necessary, I request you to detain it until I see you. Let me also request that the same attention may be given to the draught of a letter to Portsmouth and the Chamber of Commerce at New York as was recommended on that occasion. I am, etc."

*"To Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State.*

*"Private.*

*"MOUNT VERNON, July 31, 1795.*

"MY DEAR SIR.—On Wednesday evening I sent the packet, now under cover with this, to the post-office in Alexandria, to be forwarded next morning at the usual hour, 4 o'clock, by the Baltimore mail. But, behold! when my letter-bag was brought back from the office and emptied, I not only got those which were addressed to me, among which yours of the 27th was one, but those also which I had sent up the evening before.

"I have to regret this blunder of the postmaster on account of the inclosures, some of which I wished to have got to your hands without delay, that they might have undergone the consideration and acting upon which were suggested in the letter accompanying them. On another account I am not sorry for the return of the packet, as I resolved thereupon and on reading some letters which I received at the same time, to wait your acknowledgment of the receipt of my letter of the 24th instant before I would set out, as I should thereby be placed on a certainty whether your journey hither or mine to Philadelphia would, under all circumstances, be deemed most eligible, or whether the business could not be equally well done without either; repeating now what I did in my letter of the 24th, that I do not require more than a day's notice to



repair to the seat of government, and that if you and the confidential officers with you are not clear in the measures which are best to be pursued in the several matters mentioned in my last, my own opinion is, and for the reasons there given, that difficult and intricate or delicate questions had better be settled there, where the streams of information are continually flowing in, and that I would set out accordingly.

“To be wise and temperate, as well as firm, the present crisis most eminently calls for. There is too much reason to believe, from the pains which have been taken before, at, and since the advice of the Senate respecting the treaty, that the prejudices against it are more extensive than is generally imagined. This I have lately understood to be the case in this quarter, from men who are of no party, but well disposed to the present administration. How should it be otherwise, when no stone has been left unturned that could impress on the minds of the people the most arrant misrepresentation of facts: that their rights have not only been neglected, but absolutely sold; that there are no reciprocal advantages in the treaty; that the benefits are all on the side of Great Britain; and, what seems to have had more weight with them than all the rest, and to have been most pressed, that the treaty is made with the design to oppress the French, in open violation of our treaty with that nation, and contrary, too, to every principle of gratitude and sound policy? In time, when passion shall have yielded to sober reason, the current may possibly turn; but, in the meanwhile, this government, in relation to France and England, may be compared to a ship between the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis. If the treaty is ratified, the partisans of the French, or rather of war and confusion, will excite them to hostile measures, or at least to unfriendly sentiments; if it is not, there is no foreseeing

all the consequences which may follow as it respects Great Britain.

“It is not to be inferred from hence that I am disposed to quit the ground I have taken, unless circumstances more imperious than have yet come to my knowledge should compel it, for there is but one straight course, and that is to seek truth and pursue it steadily. But these things are mentioned to show that a close investigation of the subject is more than ever necessary, and that they are strong evidences of the necessity of the most circumspect conduct in carrying the determination of government into effect, with prudence as it respects our own people, and with every exertion to produce a change for the better from Great Britain.

“The memorial seems well designed to answer the end proposed, and by the time it is revised and new dressed you will probably (either in the resolutions, which are or will be handed to me, or in the newspaper publications, which you promised to be attentive to) have seen all the objections against the treaty which have any real force in them, and which may be fit subjects for representation in the memorial, or in the instructions, or both. But how much longer the presentation of the memorial can be delayed without exciting unpleasant sensations here, or involving serious evils elsewhere, you, who are at the scene of information and action can decide better than I. In a matter, however, so interesting and pregnant with consequences as this treaty, there ought to be no precipitation, but, on the contrary, every step should be explored before it is taken and every word weighed before it is uttered or delivered in writing.

“The form of the ratification requires more diplomatic experience and legal knowledge than I possess or have the

means of acquiring at this place, and, therefore, I shall say nothing about it. I am, etc.”

The answer to the selectmen of Boston, already referred to, is too characteristic to be omitted. It is as follows :

*“ To the Selectmen of the Town of Boston.*

*“ UNITED STATES, July 28, 1795.*

“ GENTLEMEN.— In every act of my administration I have sought the happiness of my fellow-citizens. My system for the attainment of this object has uniformly been to overlook all personal, local, and partial considerations ; to contemplate the United States as one great whole ; to consider that sudden impressions, when erroneous, would yield to candid reflection, and to consult only the substantial and permanent interests of our country. Nor have I departed from this line of conduct on the occasion which has produced the resolutions contained in your letter of the 13th instant.

“ Without a predilection for my own judgment, I have weighed with attention every argument which has at any time been brought into view. But the constitution is the guide which I can never abandon. It has assigned to the President the power of making treaties, with the advice and consent of the Senate. It was doubtless supposed that these two branches of government would combine, without passion and with the best means of information, those facts and principles upon which the success of our foreign relations will always depend ; that they ought not to substitute for their own conviction the opinions of others, or to seek truth through any channel but that of a temperate and well-informed investigation.

“ Under this persuasion, I have resolved on the manner

of executing the duty before me. To the high responsibility attached to it, I freely submit; and you, gentlemen, are at liberty to make these sentiments known, as the ground of my procedure. While I feel the most lively gratitude for the many instances of approbation from my country, I can no otherwise deserve it than by obeying the dictates of my conscience.

“With due respect, I am, gentlemen, your obedient

“GEORGE WASHINGTON.”

In nearly the same terms Washington replied to other committees and public bodies who thought proper to remonstrate against his exercising the constitutional right of signing the treaty.

In the afternoon of the 11th of August (1795), Washington arrived in Philadelphia, and, on the next day, the question respecting the immediate ratification of the treaty was brought before the Cabinet. Randolph, Secretary of State, maintained, singly, the opinion that, during the existence of the provision order, and during the war between Britain and France, this step ought not to be taken. This opinion, however, did not prevail. The resolution was adopted to ratify the treaty immediately and to accompany the ratification with a strong memorial against the provision order, which should convey, in explicit terms, the sense of the American government on that subject. By this course the views of the executive were happily accomplished. The order was revoked and the ratifications of the treaty were exchanged.

Washington was most probably determined to adopt this course by the extreme intemperance with which the treaty was opposed and the rapid progress which this violence was apparently making. It was obvious that, unless this

temper could be checked, it would soon become so extensive and would arrive at such a point of fury as to threaten dangerous consequences. It was obviously necessary either to attempt a diminution of its action, by rendering its exertions hopeless and by giving to the treaty the weight of his character and influence, or to determine ultimately to yield to it. A species of necessity, therefore, seems to have been created for abandoning the idea, if it was ever taken up, of making the ratification of the treaty dependent on the revocation of the provision order.

The soundness of the policy which urged this decisive measure was proved by the event. The confidence which was felt in the judgment and virtue of Washington induced many who, swept away by the popular current, had yielded to the common prejudices, to re-examine and discard opinions which had been too hastily embraced; and many were called forth by a desire to support the administration in measures actually adopted, to take a more active part in the general contest than they would otherwise have pursued. The consequence was that more moderate opinions respecting the treaty began to prevail.

In a letter from Mount Vernon of the 20th of September (1795), addressed to General Knox, who had communicated to him the change of opinion which was appearing in the eastern States, Washington expressed in warm terms the pleasure derived from that circumstance, and added: "Next to a conscientious discharge of my public duties, to carry along with me the approbation of my constituents would be the highest gratification of which my mind is susceptible. But the latter being secondary, I cannot make the former yield to it, unless some criterion more infallible than partial (if they are not party) meetings can be discovered as the touchstone of public sentiment. If any person on earth could, or the great Power above

would, erect the standard of infallibility in political opinions, no being that inhabits this terrestrial globe would resort to it with more eagerness than myself, so long as I remain a servant of the public. But as I have hitherto found no better guide than upright intentions and close investigations, I shall adhere to them while I keep watch, leaving it to those who will come after me to explore new ways, if they like, or think them better."

If the ratification of the treaty increased the number of its open advocates, it seemed also to give increased acrimony to the opposition. Such hold had Washington taken of the affections of the people that even his enemies had deemed it generally necessary to preserve, with regard to him, external marks of decency and respect. Previous to the mission of Mr. Jay, charges against Washington, though frequently insinuated, had seldom been directly made; and the cover under which the attacks upon his character were conducted evidenced the caution with which it was deemed necessary to proceed. That mission visibly affected the decorum which had been usually observed toward him, and the ratification of the treaty brought sensations into open view which had long been ill concealed. His military and political character was attacked with equal violence, and it was averred that he was totally destitute of merit, either as a soldier or a statesman. The calumnies with which he was assailed were not confined to his public conduct; even his qualities as a man were the subjects of detraction. That he had violated the constitution in negotiating a treaty without the previous advice of the Senate, and in embracing within that treaty subjects belonging exclusively to the Legislature, was openly maintained, for which an impeachment was publicly suggested; and that he had drawn from the treasury for his private use more than the salary annexed



to his office was asserted without a blush. This last allegation was said to be supported from extracts from the treasury accounts which had been laid before the Legislature, and was maintained with the most persevering effrontery.

Though Wolcott, the Secretary of the Treasury, denied that the appropriations made by the Legislature had ever been exceeded, the atrocious charge was still confidently repeated, and the few who could triumph in any spot which might tarnish the luster of Washington's fame felicitated themselves on the prospect of obtaining a victory over the reputation of a patriot, to whose single influence they ascribed the failure of their political plans. With the real public, the confidence felt in the integrity of Washington remained unshaken, but so imposing was the appearance of the documents adduced as to excite an apprehension that the transaction might be placed in a light to show that some indiscretion, in which he had not participated, had been inadvertently committed.

This state of anxious suspense was of short duration. Hamilton, late Secretary of the Treasury, during whose administration of the finances this speculation was said to have taken place, came forward with a full explanation of the fact. It appeared that Washington himself had never touched any part of the compensation annexed to his office, but that the whole was received and disbursed by the gentleman who superintended the expenses of his household. That it was the practice of the treasury, when a sum had been appropriated for the current year, to pay it to that gentleman occasionally, as the situation of the family might require. The expenses at some periods of the year exceeded and at others fell short of the allowance for the quarter, so that at some times money was paid in advance on account of the ensuing quarter, and at others, that

which was due at the end of the quarter was not completely drawn out. The secretary entered into an examination of the constitution and laws to show that this practice was justifiable, and illustrated his arguments by many examples in which an advance on account of money appropriated to a particular object, before the service was completed, would be absolutely necessary. However this might be, it was a transaction in which Washington, personally, was unconcerned.

When possessed of the entire facts, the public viewed with just indignation this attempt to defame a character which was the nation's pride. Americans felt themselves involved in this atrocious calumny on their most illustrious citizen, and its propagators were frowned into silence.

Meantime several changes were taking place in Washington's Cabinet. Edmund Randolph, the Secretary of State, resigned his office on the 19th of August, 1795, immediately after the ratification of Jay's treaty, which he had opposed. The circumstances which led to his resignation were by no means creditable to him, but as they brought out in bold relief one of Washington's noblest traits — his perfect openness and candor — we are induced to notice them in detail.

A letter addressed to his government in October, 1794, by Fauchet, the minister of the French republic, was intercepted by the captain of a British frigate and forwarded to Mr. Hammond, by whom it was delivered, about the last of July, to Mr. Wolcott, the Secretary of the Treasury, who, on the arrival of Washington in Philadelphia, placed it in his hands. This letter alluded to communications from Randolph, which, in the opinion of Washington, were excessively improper. The *éclaircissements* which the occasion required were followed by the resignation of the secretary. For the purpose, he alleged, of vindicat-

ing his conduct, he demanded a sight of a confidential letter which had been addressed to him by Washington, and which was left in the office. His avowed design was to give this, as well as some others of the same description, to the public, in order to support the allegation that, in consequence of his attachment to France and to liberty, he had fallen a victim to the intrigues of a British and an aristocratic party. The answer given to this demand was a license which few politicians, in turbulent times, could allow to a man who had possessed the unlimited confidence of the person giving it. "I have directed," said Washington, "that you should have the inspection of my letter of the 22d of July, agreeable to your request; and you are at full liberty to publish, without reserve, any and every private and confidential letter I ever wrote you; nay, more — every word I ever uttered to or in your presence from whence you can derive any advantage in your vindication."

Notwithstanding that Randolph was under the strongest personal obligations to Washington, he did not hesitate, in his lame attempt to vindicate himself, to resort to violent abuse of his late friend and patron. Washington is said to have lost his temper on reading Randolph's calumnies,\* as well he might, for it is difficult to conceive of blacker ingratitude than he suffered on this occasion. Late in life Randolph seems to have been sensible of the enormity of his conduct. On the 2d of July, 1810, he used the following language in a letter to the Hon. Bushrod Washington: "I do not retain the smallest degree of that feeling which roused me fifteen years ago against some individuals. For the world contains no treasure,

\* See Dr. Griswold's "Republican Court." Also, Sparks' "Writings of Washington," vol. XI, pp. 54, 479.

deception, or charm which can seduce me from the consolation of being in a state of good will toward all mankind, and I should not be mortified to ask pardon of any man with whom I have been at variance for any injury which I may have done him. If I could now present myself before your venerated uncle it would be my pride to confess my contrition that I suffered my irritation, let the cause be what it might, to use some of those expressions respecting him which, at this moment of my indifference to the ideas of the world, I wish to recall, as being inconsistent with my subsequent conviction. My life will, I hope, be sufficiently extended for the recording of my sincere opinion of his virtues and merit, in a style which is not the result of a mind merely debilitated by misfortune, but of that Christian philosophy on which alone I depend for inward tranquillity."

Washington offered the vacant post to Patrick Henry, who was prevented by private considerations from undertaking its duties. Rufus King, Gen. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, and two or three others were asked to enter the Cabinet as Secretary of State, but they declined. Finally Colonel Pickering, who had temporary charge of the post, was formally appointed in December of the present year. James McHenry succeeded Colonel Pickering as Secretary of War. Mr. Bradford's death, in August, caused a vacancy in the attorney-generalship, which was also filled in December by the appointment of Charles Lee, of Virginia. This office had been previously offered to General Pinckney, Colonel Carrington, of Virginia, and Governor Howard, of Maryland.

In August of this year (1795), General Wayne concluded a treaty of peace, at Greenville, with the chiefs of the Wyandots, Delawares, Chippeways, and other Indian tribes. By this treaty the Indians ceded the post of De-

troit and a considerable tract of adjacent land to the United States. A tract of land was ceded on the main, to the north of the island on which the post of Michilimackinac stood, measuring six miles on lakes Huron and Michigan, and extending three miles back from the water of the lake or strait. De Bois Blanc, or White Wood Island, was also ceded — the voluntary gift of the Chippeways.

The foreign affairs of the United States had now begun to assume a more favorable aspect. A treaty was concluded with Spain on the 27th of October (1795). It was confined principally to the two great subjects in dispute, and was styled a treaty of friendship, limits, and navigation. By this the line between the United States and east and west Florida was settled, and the western boundary of the United States, which separated them from the Colony of Louisiana, was fixed in the middle of the channel of the Mississippi river to the thirty-first degree of north latitude; and it was also agreed that the navigation of that river, from its source to the ocean, should be free only to the subjects and citizens of the two countries.

It was further stipulated that both parties should use all the means in their power to maintain peace and harmony among the Indian nations on their borders, and both parties bound themselves to restrain, even by force, the Indians within their limits from acts of hostilities against the other, and it was also agreed that neither party would thereafter make any treaties with those who did not live within their respective limits. Provision was also made that free ships should make free goods, and that no citizen or subject of either party should take a commission or letters of marque for arming any vessel, to act as a privateer, from their respective enemies, under the penalty of being considered and punished as a pirate.

Thus, after a tedious and unpleasant negotiation of about

fifteen years, the boundaries between the countries belonging to the United States and Spain, in America, were settled, and the right of navigating every part of the Mississippi, a right so essential to the interests of our vast western territory, was secured to the United States.

In November (1795) Washington had the gratification to bring to a close the long negotiations with the Dey of Algiers, by which peace was established with those piratical marauders and the release of American captives obtained. This was accomplished through the agency of Colonel Humphreys, Joel Barlow, and Mr. Donaldson, and about 120 prisoners were released from cruel bondage, some of whom had been in this ignominious condition more than ten years.

During the recess of Congress Washington paid a visit to Mount Vernon, which lasted from the middle of September (1795) till near the end of October. During this time his attention was divided between the concerns of his estate and the public affairs of that exciting period.



## CHAPTER X.

### WASHINGTON MAINTAINS THE TREATY-MAKING POWER OF THE EXECUTIVE.

1795-1796.

THE first session of the Fourth Congress commenced on the 7th of December, 1795. Although the ratification of the treaties with Spain and Algiers had not been officially announced at the meeting of Congress the state of the negotiations with both powers was sufficiently well understood to enable Washington with confidence to assure the Legislature, in his speech at the opening of the session, that those negotiations were in a train which promised a happy issue.

After expressing his gratification at the prosperous state of American affairs the various favorable events which have been already enumerated were detailed in a succinct statement, at the close of which he mentioned the British treaty, which, though publicly known, had not before been communicated officially to the House of Representatives.

"This interesting summary of our affairs," continued the speech, "with regard to the powers between whom and the United States controversies have subsisted, and with regard also to our Indian neighbors with whom we have been in a state of enmity or misunderstanding, opens a wide field for consoling and gratifying reflections. If by prudence and moderation on every side, the extinguishment of all the causes of external discord which have heretofore menaced our tranquillity, on terms compatible with

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our national faith and honor, shall be the happy results, how firm and how precious a foundation will have been laid for accelerating, maturing, and establishing the prosperity of our country!"

After presenting an animated picture of the situation of the United States, and recommending several objects to the attention of the Legislature, Washington concluded with observing: "Temperate discussion of the important subjects that may arise in the course of the session, and mutual forbearance where there is a difference in opinion, are too obvious and necessary for the peace, happiness, and welfare of our country to need any recommendation of mine."

In the Senate an address was reported which echoed back the sentiments of the speech.

In this House of Representatives, as in the last, the party in opposition to the administration had obtained a majority. This party was unanimously hostile to the treaty with Great Britain, and it was expected that their answer to the speech of the President would indicate their sentiments on a subject which continued to agitate the whole American people. The answer reported by the committee contained a declaration that the confidence of his fellow-citizens in the chief magistrate remained undiminished.

On a motion to strike out the words importing this sentiment it was averred that the clause asserted an untruth; that it was not true that the confidence of the people in the President was undiminished; that by a recent transaction it had been considerably impaired, and some gentlemen declared that their own confidence in him was lessened.

By the friends of the administration this motion was opposed with great zeal, and the opinion that the confidence of the people in their chief magistrate remained unshaken,

was maintained with ardor. But they were outnumbered.

To avoid a direct vote on the proposition it was moved that the address should be recommitted. This motion succeeded and, two members being added to the committee, an answer was reported, in which the clause objected to was so modified as to be free from exception.

That part of the speech which mentioned the treaty with Great Britain was alluded to in terms which, though not directly expressive of disapprobation, were sufficiently indicative of the prevailing sentiment.

Early in the month of January (1796) Washington transmitted to both houses of Congress a message, accompanying certain communications from the French government which were well calculated to cherish those ardent feelings that prevailed in the Legislature.

It was the fortune of Mr. Monroe to reach Paris soon after the death of Robespierre and the fall of the Jacobins. On his reception as the minister of the United States, which was public, and in the convention, he gave free scope to the genuine feelings of his heart, and, at the same time, delivered to the president of that body, with his credentials, two letters addressed by the Secretary of State to the committee of public safety. These letters were answers to one written by the committee of safety to the Congress of the United States. The executive department being the organ through which all foreign intercourse was to be conducted, each branch of the Legislature had passed a resolution directing this letter to be transmitted to the President with a request that he would cause it to be answered in terms expressive of their friendly dispositions toward the French republic.

So fervent were the sentiments expressed on this occasion that the convention decreed that the flag of the American and French republics should be united together and

suspended in its own hall in testimony of eternal union and friendship between the two people. To evince the impression made on his mind by this act, and the grateful sense of his constituents, Mr. Monroe presented to the convention the flag of the United States, which he prayed them to accept as a proof of the sensibility with which his country received every act of friendship from its ally, and of the pleasure with which it cherished every incident which tended to cement and consolidate the union between the two nations.

The committee of safety again addressed Congress in terms adapted to that department of government which superintends its foreign intercourse and expressive, among other sentiments, of the sensibility with which the French nation had perceived those sympathetic emotions with which the American people had viewed the vicissitudes of her fortune. Mr. Adet, who was to succeed Mr. Fauchet at Philadelphia, and who was the bearer of this letter, also brought with him the colors of France, which he was directed to present to the United States. He arrived in the summer, but, probably in the idea that these communications were to be made by him directly to Congress, did not announce them to the executive until late in December (1795).

The first day of the new year (1796) was named for their reception, when the colors were delivered to Washington, and the letter to Congress also was placed in his hands.

In executing this duty Mr. Adet addressed a speech to the President, which, in the glowing language of his country, represented France as struggling not only for her own liberty, but for that of the human race. "Assimilated to, or rather identified with, free people by the form of her government, she saw in them," he said, "only friends and brothers. Long accustomed to regard the

American people as her most faithful allies she sought to draw closer the ties already formed in the fields of America, under the auspices of victory, over the ruins of tyranny."

To answer this speech was a task of some delicacy. It was necessary to express feelings adapted to the occasion without implying sentiments with respect to the belligerent powers which might be improper to be used by the chief magistrate of a neutral country. With a view to both these objects Washington made the following reply:

"Born, sir, in a land of liberty; having early learned its value; having engaged in a perilous conflict to defend it; having, in a word, devoted the best years of my life to secure its permanent establishment in my own country, my anxious recollections, my sympathetic feelings, and my best wishes are irresistibly attracted, whensoever, in any country, I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of freedom. But, above all, the events of the French revolution have produced the deepest solicitude as well as the highest admiration. To call your nation brave were to pronounce but common praise. Wonderful people! ages to come will read with astonishment the history of your brilliant exploits. I rejoice that the period of your toils and of your immense sacrifices is approaching. I rejoice that the interesting revolutionary movements of so many years have issued in the formation of a constitution designed to give permanency to the great object for which you have contended. I rejoice that liberty, which you have so long embraced with enthusiasm—liberty, of which you have been the invincible defenders, now finds an asylum in the bosom of a regularly organized government—a government which, being formed to secure the happiness of the French people, corresponds with the ardent wishes of my heart, while it gratifies the pride of every citizen of

the United States by its resemblance to their own. On these glorious events accept, sir, my sincere congratulations.

“In delivering to you these sentiments I express not my own feelings only, but those of my fellow-citizens in relation to the commencement, the progress, and the issue of the French revolution, and they will certainly join with me in purest wishes to the Supreme Being that the citizens of our sister republic, our magnanimous allies, may soon enjoy in peace that liberty which they have purchased at so great a price, and all the happiness that liberty can bestow.

“I receive, sir, with lively sensibility the symbol of the triumphs and of the enfranchisement of your nation, the colors of France, which you have now presented to the United States. The transaction will be announced to Congress and the colors will be deposited with the archives of the United States, which are at once the evidence and the memorials of their freedom and independence. May these be perpetual! and may the friendship of the two republics be commensurate with their existence!”

The address of Mr. Adet, the answer of the President, and the colors of France, were transmitted to Congress with the letter from the committee of safety.

In the House of Representatives a resolution was moved, requesting the President to make known to the representatives of the French republic the sincere and lively sensations which were excited by this honorable testimony of the existing sympathy and affections of the two republics; that the House rejoiced in an opportunity of congratulating the French republic on the brilliant and glorious achievements accomplished during the present afflictive war, and hoped that those achievements would be attended with a perfect attainment of their object — the



permanent establishment of the liberty and happiness of that great and magnanimous people.

In February (1796) the treaty with Great Britain was returned, in the form advised by the Senate, ratified by his Brittanic majesty. The constitution declaring a treaty, when made, the supreme law of the land, the President announced it officially to the people in a proclamation, requiring from all persons its observance and execution, a copy of which was transmitted to each House on the 1st of March.

The opposition having openly denied the right of the President to negotiate a treaty of commerce was not a little dissatisfied at his venturing to issue this proclamation before the sense of the House of Representatives had been declared on the obligation of the instrument.

This dissatisfaction was not concealed. On the 2d of March Mr. Livingston laid upon the table a resolution requesting the President "to lay before the House a copy of the instructions to the minister of the United States, who negotiated the treaty with the King of Great Britain, communicated by his message of the 1st of March, together with the correspondence and other documents relative to the said treaty."

On the 7th of March he amended this resolution by adding the words, "excepting such of the said papers as any existing negotiation may render improper to be disclosed."

The friends of the administration maintained that a treaty was a contract between two nations, which, under the constitution, the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, had a right to make, and that it was made when, by and with such advice and consent, it had received his final act. Its obligations then became complete on the United States, and to refuse to comply with

its stipulations was to break the treaty and to violate the faith of the nation.

The opposition contended that the power to make treaties, if applicable to every object, conflicted with powers which were vested exclusively in Congress; that either the treaty-making power must be limited in its operation, so as not to touch objects committed by the constitution to Congress, or the assent and co-operation of the House of Representatives must be required to give validity to any compact, so far as it might comprehend those objects. A treaty, therefore, which required an appropriation of money, or any act of Congress to carry it into effect, had not acquired its obligatory force until the House of Representatives had exercised its powers in the case. They were at full liberty to make, or to withhold, such appropriation or other law, without incurring the imputation of violating any existing obligation or of breaking the faith of the nation.

The debate on this question was animated, vehement, and argumentative, all the party passions were enlisted in it, and it was protracted until the 24th of March (1796), when the resolution was carried in the affirmative by sixty-two to thirty-seven votes. The next day, the committee appointed to present it to the chief magistrate reported his answer which was, "that he would take the resolution into consideration."

The situation in which this vote placed the President was peculiarly delicate. In an elective government, the difficulty of resisting the popular branch of the Legislature is at all times great, but is particularly so when the passions of the public have been strongly and generally excited. The popularity of a demand for information, the large majority by which that demand was supported, the additional force which a refusal to comply with it would give to sus-

pitions already insinuated, that circumstances had occurred in the negotiation which the administration dared not expose, and that the President was separating himself from the representatives of the people, furnished motives of no ordinary force for complying with the request of the House of Representatives.

But Washington viewed every question which came before him with a single eye to the performance of his duty to the country. Hitherto, on more than one occasion, he had proved himself the defender of the constitution, but he had never been called upon to defend it against so formidable an attack as that which was now made.

That the future diplomatic transactions of the government might be seriously and permanently affected by establishing the principle that the House of Representatives could demand, as a right, the instructions given to a foreign minister, and all the papers connected with a negotiation, was too apparent to be unobserved. Nor was it less obvious that a compliance with the request now made would go far in establishing this principle. The form of the request, and the motives which induced it, equally led to this conclusion. It left nothing to the discretion of the President with regard to the public interests, and the information was asked for the avowed purpose of determining whether the House of Representatives would give effect to a public treaty.

It was also a subject for serious reflection that, in a debate unusually elaborate, the House of Representatives had claimed a right of interference in the formation of treaties, which, in the judgment of the President, the constitution had denied them. Duties the most sacred requiring that he should resist this encroachment on the department which was particularly confided to him, he could not hesitate respecting the course it became him to

take, and on the 30th of March he returned to the House the following answer to their resolution:

“With the utmost attention I have considered your resolution of the 24th instant, requesting me to lay before your House a copy of the instructions to the minister of the United States, who negotiated the treaty with the King of Great Britain, together with the correspondence and other documents relative to that treaty, excepting such of the said papers as any existing negotiation may render improper to be disclosed.

“In deliberating upon this subject it was impossible for me to lose sight of the principle which some have avowed in its discussion, or to avoid extending my views to the consequences which must flow from the admission of that principle.

“I trust that no part of my conduct has ever indicated a disposition to withhold any information which the constitution has enjoined it upon the President as a duty to give or which could be required of him by either House of Congress as a right, and with truth I affirm, that it has been, as it will continue to be, while I have the honor to preside in the government, my constant endeavor to harmonize with the other branches thereof, so far as the trust delegated to me by the people of the United States, and my sense of the obligation it imposes to preserve, protect and defend the constitution will permit.

“The nature of foreign negotiations requires caution, and their success must often depend on secrecy, and even when brought to a conclusion, a full disclosure of all the measures, demands, or eventual concessions which may have been proposed or contemplated, would be extremely impolitic, for this might have a pernicious influence on future negotiations or produce immediate inconveniences, perhaps danger and mischief to other persons. The neces-

sity of such caution and secrecy was one cogent reason for vesting the power of making treaties in the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, the principle on which that body was formed confining it to a small number of members.

“To admit, then, a right in the House of Representatives to demand and to have as a matter of course, all the papers respecting a negotiation with a foreign power, would be to establish a dangerous precedent.

“It does not occur that the inspection of the papers asked for can be relative to any purpose under the cognizance of the House of Representatives, except that of an impeachment, which the resolution has not expressed. I repeat, that I have no disposition to withhold any information which the duty of my station will permit or the public good shall require to be disclosed, and, in fact, all the papers affecting the negotiation with Great Britain were laid before the Senate, when the treaty itself was communicated for their consideration and advice.

“The course which the debate has taken on the resolution of the House, leads to some observations on the mode of making treaties under the constitution of the United States.

“Having been a member of the general convention and knowing the principles on which the constitution was formed, I have ever entertained but one opinion upon this subject, and from the first establishment of the government to this moment my conduct has exemplified that opinion — that the power of making treaties is exclusively vested in the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, provided two-thirds of the senators present concur, and that every treaty so made and promulgated, thenceforward becomes the law of the land. It is thus that the treaty-making power has been understood by foreign

nations, and in all the treaties made with them, we have declared, and they have believed, that when ratified by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, they became obligatory. In this construction of the constitution every House of Representatives has heretofore acquiesced, and, until the present time, not a doubt or suspicion has appeared, to my knowledge, that this construction was not a true one. Nay, they have more than acquiesced, for until now, without controverting the obligation of such treaties, they have made all the requisite provisions for carrying them into effect.

“There is also reason to believe that this construction agrees with the opinions entertained by the State conventions when they were deliberating on the constitution, especially by those who objected to it because there was not required, in commercial treaties, the consent of two-thirds of the whole number of the members of the Senate, instead of two-thirds of the senators present, and because, in treaties respecting territorial and certain other rights and claims, the concurrence of three-fourths of the whole number of the members of both Houses respectively was not made necessary.

“It is a fact declared by the general convention and universally understood, that the constitution of the United States was the result of a spirit of amity and mutual concession. And it is well known that under this influence the smaller States were admitted to an equal representation in the Senate with the larger States, and that this branch of the government was invested with great powers, for on the equal participation of those powers the sovereignty and political safety of the smaller States were deemed essentially to depend.

“If other proofs than these, and the plain letter of the constitution itself, be necessary to ascertain the points un-



der consideration, they may be found in the journals of the general convention, which I have deposited in the office of the Department of State. In these journals it will appear that a proposition was made 'that no treaty should be binding on the United States which was not ratified by a law,' and that the proposition was explicitly rejected.

"As, therefore, it is perfectly clear to my understanding that the assent of the House of Representatives is not necessary to the validity of a treaty, as the treaty with Great Britain exhibits in itself all the objects requiring legislative provision—and on these the papers called for can throw no light, and as it is essential to the due administration of the government that the boundaries fixed by the constitution between the different departments should be preserved, a just regard to the constitution and to the duty of my office, under all the circumstances of this case, forbids a compliance with your request."

The terms in which this decided, and, it would seem, unexpected negative to the call for papers was conveyed, appeared to break the last cord of that attachment which had theretofore bound some of the active leaders of the opposition to Washington. Amidst all the agitations and irritations of party a sincere respect and real affection for him, the remnant of former friendship, had still lingered in the bosoms of some who had engaged with ardor in the political contests of the day. But, if the last spark of this affection was not now extinguished, it was at least concealed under the more active passions of the moment.

Washington's message was referred to a committee of the whole house. It was severely criticized and resolutions were adopted, by a vote of fifty-seven to thirty-five, declaring the sense of the House on this matter, and claiming the right to deliberate on the expediency of carrying

into effect stipulations made by treaty on subjects committed by the constitution to Congress.

In March the subject came up incidentally. The treaties with the King of Spain and with the Dey of Algiers were ratified by the President and laid before Congress. On the 13th of April (1796), Mr. Sedgwick moved, "that provision ought to be made by law for carrying into effect with good faith the treaties lately concluded with the Dey and Regency of Algiers, the King of Great Britain, the King of Spain, and certain Indian tribes northwest of the Ohio." After much altercation on the subject of thus joining all these treaties together, a division was made, and the question taken on each. The resolution was amended by a majority of eighteen so as to read, "that it is expedient to pass the laws necessary for carrying into effect," &c.

The subject of the British treaty was again taken up on the 15th of April. Its friends urged an immediate decision of the question, alleging that every member had made up his mind already, and that dispatch was necessary, in case the treaty was to be carried into effect. The posts were to be delivered up on the 1st of June, and this required previous arrangements on the part of the American government. They appear to have entertained the opinion that the majority would not dare to encounter the immense responsibility of breaking the treaty without previously ascertaining that the great body of the people were willing to meet the consequences of the measure. But its opponents, though confident of their power to reject the resolution, called for its discussion.

The minority soon desisted from urging an immediate decision of the question, and the spacious field which was opened by the propositions before the House was entered into with equal avidity and zeal by both parties. Gallatin, Madison, Giles, Nicholas, Preston, and other eminent

members of the republican party, in animated terms opposed the execution of the treaty and entered fully into the discussion of its merits and demerits. Fisher Ames, Dwight, Foster, Harper, Lyman, Dayton, and other men of note among the Federalists, urged every possible argument in its favor.

The debate on this occasion is one of the most celebrated which has ever taken place in Congress. Fisher Ames' speech is acknowledged to have been the most remarkable and effective which he ever made. So completely was the House carried away by his eloquence that an adjournment was carried for the avowed reason that it was not possible to decide calmly on the question until the members should have taken time for reflection. Reflection convinced not only the members of Congress, but the people, that the opposition to the execution of the treaty was ill advised and unreasonable. The length of time consumed in the debates was favorable to a just view of the subject, and finally a majority of the members who had been opposed to the treaty yielded to the exigency of the case and united in passing the laws which were necessary for its fulfilment.

On the 29th of April (1796) the question was taken in committee of the whole and was determined by the casting vote of the chairman in its favor. The resolution was finally carried in the House by a vote of fifty-one to forty-eight.

Besides the acts which arose out of the treaties, Congress passed others, regulating the dealings of the inhabitants of the western frontier with the Indians; authorizing the survey of certain public lands, with a view to the sale of them; ordaining measures for the protection and relief of American seamen, and equalizing the pay of members of both Houses of Congress. There were some \$6,000,000, which was not quite the full amount of the income, appro-

priated to the public service and the interest of the debt. But there were so many other demands upon the treasury that, after vainly endeavoring to obtain another loan, part of the bank stock was sold, a procedure which was reprobated by Hamilton as a violation of system. The opposition party would not agree to raise further revenue by indirect internal taxation, and only that augmenting the duty on pleasure carriages was passed into a law. Equally strenuous was their opposition to a naval force. Even under the pressure of the Algerine piracies, the bill providing a decent naval force in the Mediterranean could not be carried through the House without inserting a section which should suspend all proceedings under the act in case the contest with Algiers was brought to an end. That event having occurred, not a single frigate could be completed without further authority from the Legislature. Although no peace had been concluded with Tunis or Tripoli it was with the utmost difficulty that a bill for the completion of three, instead of six, frigates could be carried. On the 1st of June (1796) this long and important session of Congress was brought to its close.

Before Congress rose Washington had written (May 22, 1796) to Thomas Pinckney, the American minister in England, who had desired his recall. In this letter he refers to the recent debate in Congress on passing the laws necessary to give effect to the treaty: "A long and animated discussion," he writes, "in the House of Representatives respecting the treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation with Great Britain took place and continued in one shape or another till the last of April, suspending in a manner all other business, and agitating the public mind in a higher degree than it has been at any period since the Revolution. And nothing, I believe, but the torrent of petitions and

remonstrances, which were pouring in from all the eastern and middle States and were beginning to come pretty strongly from that of Virginia, requiring the necessary provisions for carrying the treaty into effect, would have produced a division (fifty-one to forty-eight) in favor of the appropriation.

“But as the debates, which I presume will be sent to you from the Department of State, will give you a view of this business more in detail than I am able to do, I shall refer you to them. The inclosed speech, however, made by Mr. Ames at the close of the discussion, I send to you, because, in the opinion of most who heard it delivered or have read it since, his reasoning is unanswerable.

“The doubtful issue of the dispute and the real difficulty in finding a character to supply your place at the court of London, has occasioned a longer delay than may have been convenient or agreeable to you. But as Mr. King of the Senate, who, it seems, had resolved to quit his seat at that board, has accepted the appointment, and will embark as soon as matters can be arranged, you will soon be relieved.

“In my letter of the 20th of February I expressed in pretty strong terms my sensibility on account of the situation of the Marquis de Lafayette. This is increased by the visible distress of his son, who is now with me, and grieving for the unhappy fate of his parents. This circumstance, giving a poignancy to my own feelings, has induced me to go a step further than I did in the letter above mentioned, as you will perceive by the inclosed address (a copy of which is also transmitted for your information) to the Emperor of Germany, to be forwarded by you in such a manner, and under such auspices, as in your judgment shall be deemed best, or to be withheld, if from the evi-



dence before you, derived from former attempts, it shall appear clear that it would be of no avail to send it.\*

"Before I close this letter permit me to request the favor of you to embrace some favorable occasion to thank Lord Grenville, in my behalf, for his politeness in causing a special permit to be sent to Liverpool for the shipment of two sacks of field peas and the like quantity of winter vetches, which I had requested our consul at that place to send me for seed, but which it seems could not be done without an order from government, a circumstance which did not occur to me or I certainly should not have given the trouble of issuing one for such a trifle."

Rufus King, senator from New York, above referred to, had been nominated to the Senate as minister to London on the 19th of May, three days before the date of Washington's letter to Mr. Pinckney. Hamilton, writing to Washington respecting him, thus describes his character: "Mr. King is a remarkably well-informed man, a very judicious one, a man of address, a man of fortune and economy, whose situation affords just ground of confidence; a man of unimpeached probity where he is known, a firm friend to the government, a supporter of the measures of the President; a man who cannot but feel that he has strong pretensions to confidence and trust."

In June (1796) the President went to Mount Vernon where he continued for more than two months. He kept up a constant correspondence with his secretaries, and held

\* This letter, dated May 15, 1796, contained an affecting statement of Lafayette's case, and a request that he might be permitted to come to the United States. The letter was transmitted to Mr. Pinckney, to be conveyed to the Emperor through his minister at London. How far it operated in mitigating immediately the rigor of Lafayette's confinement, or in obtaining his liberation, remains unascertained.



himself ever in readiness to return to the seat of government, if his presence should be needed.

During this visit to Mount Vernon the following letter was written to Thomas Jefferson. It brought the correspondence, which, from time to time, had taken place between them, to a final close.

“MOUNT VERNON, *July 6, 1796.*

“DEAR SIR:—When I inform you that your letter of the 19th ultimo went to Philadelphia and returned to this place before it was received by me, it will be admitted, I am persuaded, as an apology for my not having acknowledged the receipt of it sooner.

“If I had entertained any suspicions before that the queries which have been published in Bache’s paper proceeded from you the assurances you have given of the contrary would have removed them, but the truth is, I harbored none. I am at no loss to conjecture from what source they flowed, through what channel they were conveyed, and for what purpose they and similar publications appear. They were known to be in the hands of Mr. Parker in the early part of the last session of Congress. They were shown about by Mr. Giles during the session and they made their public exhibition about the close of it.

“Perceiving, and probably hearing, that no abuse in the gazettes would induce me to take notice of anonymous publications against me, those who were disposed to do me such friendly offices have embraced, without restraint, every opportunity to weaken the confidence of the people, and, by having the whole game in their hands, they have scrupled not to publish things that do not, as well as those which do exist, and to mutilate the latter, so as to make them subserve the purposes which they have in view.

“As you have mentioned the subject yourself, it would

not be frank, candid, or friendly to conceal that your conduct has been represented as derogating from that opinion I had conceived you entertained of me, that to your particular friends and connections you have described, and they have denounced, me as a person under a dangerous influence, and that if I would listen more to some other opinions all would be well. My answer invariably has been that I had never discovered anything in the conduct of Mr. Jefferson to raise suspicions in my mind of his insincerity; that, if he would retrace my public conduct while he was in the administration, abundant proofs would occur to him that truth and right decisions were the sole objects of my pursuit; that there were as many instances within his own knowledge of my having decided against as in favor of the opinions of the person evidently alluded to, and, moreover, that I was no believer in the infallibility of the politics or measures of any man living. In short, that I was no partyman myself, and the first wish of my heart was, if parties did exist, to reconcile them.

“To this I may add, and very truly, that, until within the last year or two I had no conception that parties would, or even could, go the length I have been witness to, nor did I believe until lately that it was within the bounds of probability, hardly within those of possibility, that, while I was using my utmost exertions to establish a national character of our own, independent, as far as our obligations and justice would permit, of every nation of the earth, and wished, by steering a steady course, to preserve this country from the horrors of a desolating war, I should be accused of being the enemy of one nation and subject to the influence of another, and, to prove it, that every act of my administration would be tortured and the grossest and most insidious misrepresentations of them be made, by giving one side only of a subject, and that too in such exaggerated

and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket. But enough of this. I have already gone further in the expression of my feelings than I intended."

The queries referred to in the above letter were those which had been addressed to the Cabinet by Washington previous to the arrival of Mr. Genet. As they were strictly confidential and could not have been obtained for publication without treachery somewhere, Jefferson had written to Washington to exculpate himself. It will be seen that Washington, with his usual magnanimity, accepts the explanation of Jefferson; but, as the party of which the latter was the acknowledged leader were constantly carrying on the war of politics by abusing and misrepresenting the former's motives and purposes, it is not surprising that their correspondence should have terminated at this time.

Of the numerous misrepresentations and fabrications which, with unwearied industry, were passed upon the public in order to withdraw the confidence of the nation from its chief, no one marked more strongly the depravity of that principle which justifies the means by the end, than the republication of certain forged letters, purporting to have been written by General Washington in the year 1776.

These letters had been originally published in the year 1777, and in them were interspersed, with domestic occurrences which might give them the semblance of verity, certain political sentiments favorable to Britain in the then existing contest.

But the original fabricator of these papers missed his aim. It was necessary to assign the manner in which the possession of them was acquired, and, in executing this part of his task, circumstances were stated so notoriously untrue, that, at the time, the meditated imposition deceived no person.

In the indefatigable research for testimony which might countenance the charge that the executive was unfriendly to France and under the influence of Britain, these letters were drawn from the oblivion into which they had sunk, it had been supposed forever, and were republished as genuine. The silence with which Washington treated this as well as every other calumny, was construed into an acknowledgment of its truth, and the malignant commentators on this spurious text would not admit the possibility of its being apocryphal.

Those who labored incessantly to establish the favorite position that the executive was under other than French influence, reviewed every act of the administration connected with its foreign relations, and continued to censure every part of the system with extreme bitterness. Not only the treaty with Great Britain, but all those measures which had been enjoined by the duties of neutrality, were reprobated as justly offensive to France, and no opinion which had been advanced by Mr. Genet, in his construction of the treaties between the two nations, was too extravagant to be approved. The most ardent patriot could not maintain the choicest rights of his country with more zeal than was manifested in supporting all the claims of the French republic upon the United States. This conduct of the opposition increased the disposition of the French government to urge charges against that of this country, and the French minister regulated his proceedings accordingly.

In the anxiety which was felt by Washington to come to a full and immediate explanation with the French Directory on the treaty with Great Britain, Colonel Monroe, the American minister at Paris, had been furnished, even before its ratification, and still more fully afterwards, with ample materials for the justification of his government. But, misconceiving the views of the administration, he reserved

these representations until complaints should be made, and omitted to urge them while the Directory was deliberating on the course it should pursue. Meanwhile, his letters kept up the alarm with regard to the dispositions of France, and intelligence from the West Indies served to confirm it. Washington received information that the special agents of the Directory in the islands were about to issue orders for the capture of all American vessels laden in whole or in part with provisions and bound for any port within the dominions of the British Crown.

Knowing well that the intentions of the executive had been at all times friendly to the French republic, Washington had relied with confidence on early and candid communications for the removal of any prejudices or misconceptions. That the Directory would be disappointed at the adjustment of those differences which threatened to embroil the United States with Great Britain, could not be doubted, but, as neither this adjustment, nor the arrangements connected with it had furnished any real cause of complaint, he had cherished the hope that it would produce no serious consequences if the proper means of prevention should be applied in time. He was therefore dissatisfied with delays which he had not expected, and seems to have believed that they originated in a want of zeal to justify a measure which neither the minister himself, nor his political friends, had ever approved. To insure an earnest and active representation of the true sentiments of the executive, Washington was inclined to depute an envoy extraordinary for the particular purpose, who should be united with the actual minister, but an objection, drawn from the constitution, was suggested to the measure. It was doubted whether the President could, in the recess of the Senate, appoint a minister when no vacancy existed. From respect to this construction of the constitution, the resolu-



tion was taken to appoint a successor to Colonel Monroe. The choice of a person calculated for this mission was not without its difficulty. While a disposition friendly to the administration was indispensable, it was desirable that the person employed should have given no umbrage to the French government.

After some deliberation, Washington selected Gen. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, of South Carolina, for this critical and important service. In the early part of the French revolution, he had felt and expressed all the enthusiasm of his countrymen for the establishment of the republic, but, after the commencement of its contests with the United States, he stood aloof from both those political parties which divided America.

He was recommended to the President by an intimate knowledge of his worth, by a confidence in the sincerity of his personal attachment to the chief magistrate, by a conviction that his exertions to effect the objects of his mission would be ardent and sincere, and that, whatever might be his partialities for France, he possessed a high and delicate sense of national as well as individual honor, was jealous for the reputation of his country, and tenacious of its rights.\*

In July, immediately after the appointment of General Pinckney, letters were received from Colonel Monroe communicating the official complaints which had been made against the American government in March, by M. de la Croix, the minister of exterior relations, with his answer to those complaints. He had effectually refuted the criminations of M. de la Croix, and the executive was satisfied

\* Before offering the appointment of minister to France to General Pinckney, Washington had offered it to Gen. John Marshall, afterward chief justice; but the situation of his private affairs would not permit its acceptance.



with his answer. But the Directory had decided on their system, and it was not by reasoning that their decision was to be changed.

Washington's correspondence with the members of the Cabinet during his summer residence at Mount Vernon was incessant. In his letters to James McHenry, Secretary of War, we find evidence of his attention to minute details of business, and his care of the public funds. In his letters of the 8th of August, we find, besides a reference to the fact of the delivery of the posts on the frontier by Great Britain, under the treaty, some curious details respecting the army: "Your letter of the 3d instant," he writes, "with the information of our possession of Fort Ontario, lately occupied by the troops of Great Britain, and the correspondence between Captain Bruff of the United States troops, and Captain Clarke of the British, was brought to me by the last post. Several matters are submitted by the former for consideration — among them, the mode of supplying the garrison with firewood, and furnishing it with a seine. With respect to the first of these, providing it with a horse or pair of horses and a batteau, as the fuel is to be transported so far, seems to be a matter of necessity, but the practice of the American army should be consulted for precedents, before the British allowance is made to the soldiers for cutting and transporting it to the fort, when the means by which it is done are furnished by the public. If no allowance of this sort has been made heretofore in towns, where wood was to be bought, which, if I remember rightly, was the case invariably while I commanded the army, it would be a dangerous innovation to begin it now, for it would instantly pervade all the garrisons and the whole army, be their situation what it may. In time of peace, where no danger is to be apprehended, and where the duty is light, I see no hardship in the soldiers providing



THOMAS JEFFERSON.



fuel for their own use and comfort. With regard to a seine, as the expense would be small if it is taken care of, and the convenience great, I think the garrison should be indulged with one." He had always an eye to the comfort of the soldier as well as to economy in the expenditure of the public money. The garrison might have horses for draught, a batteau, and a seine to catch fish in the lake, but in time of peace they were not to have extra pay for cutting wood to keep themselves warm.

## CHAPTER XI.

### WASHINGTON RETIRES FROM THE PRESIDENCY.

1796-1797.

WASHINGTON'S fixed determination to retire from office at the end of his second term had long been known to his confidential friends. Many of them had opposed it from an apprehension of a political crisis arising from the hostile demonstrations of France and the strong support given to French pretensions by the opposition party in this country. When, in July (1796), Washington proposed to declare publicly his determination, Hamilton wrote to him, "If a storm gathers, how can you retreat? This is a most serious question." Washington, yielding to the wishes of Hamilton and other intimate friends, delayed the announcement of his purpose.

As the time for a new election approached the people, uncertain of his intentions, became extremely anxious. The strong hold, says Marshall, which Washington had taken of the affections of his countrymen was, on this occasion, fully evinced. In districts where the opposition to his administration was most powerful, where all his measures were most loudly condemned, where those who approved his system possessed least influence, the men who appeared to control public opinion on every other subject found themselves unable to move it on this. Even the most popular among the leaders of the opposition were reduced to the necessity of surrendering their pretensions to a place in the electoral body or of pledging themselves

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to bestow their suffrage on the actual President. The determination of his fellow-citizens had been unequivocally manifested, and it was believed to be apparent that the election would again be unanimous when he announced his fixed resolution to withdraw from the honors and the toils of office.

Having long contemplated this event and having wished to terminate his political course with an act which might be at the same time suitable to his own character and permanently useful to his country, he had prepared for the occasion a valedictory address in which, with the solicitude of a person who, in bidding a final adieu to his friends, leaves his affections and his anxieties for their welfare behind him, he made a last effort to impress upon his countrymen those great political truths which had been the guides of his own administration and could alone, in his opinion, form a sure and solid basis for the happiness, the independence, and the liberty of the United States.

This interesting paper was published on the 17th of September, at a time when hopes were entertained that the discontents of France might be appeased by proper representations. It contains precepts to which the American statesman cannot too frequently recur.

## WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:—The period for a new election of a citizen to administer the executive government of the United States being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public



voice, that I should not apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom the choice is to be made.

I beg you at the same time to do me the justice to be assured that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country, and that in withdrawing the tender of service, which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness, but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you, but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety, and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove of my determination to retire.

The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust were explained on the proper occasion. In

the discharge of this trust I will only say that I have, with good intentions, contributed toward the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself, and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe, that while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is to terminate the career of my political life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me, and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise and as an instructive example in our annals, that, under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead — amidst appearances sometimes dubious — vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging — in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism — the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement

to unceasing wishes, that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence — that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual — that the free constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained — that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue — that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and the adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

Here, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare which cannot end but with my life and the apprehension of danger natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments, which are the result of much reflection of no inconsiderable observation and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

The unity of government, which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you. It is justly so, for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad, of your safety, of your prosperity, of that very liberty which

you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee that from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth, as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness, that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it, accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity, watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety, discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned, and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together; the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your

interest. Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the union of the whole.

The North, in an unrestrained intercourse with the South, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter, great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise, and precious materials of manufacturing industry. The South, in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the North, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the North, it finds its particular navigation invigorated—and while it contributes, in different ways, to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength to which itself is unequally adapted. The East, in like intercourse with the West, already finds and in the progressive improvement of interior communications by land and water, will more and more find a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad or manufactures at home. The West derives from the East supplies requisite to its growth and comfort, and, what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the secure enjoyment of indispensable outlets for its own productions, to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as one nation. Any other tenure by which the West can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength or from an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and



efforts, greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations, and, what is of inestimable value, they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves which so frequently afflict neighboring countries, not tied together by the same government, which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence likewise they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments, which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind and exhibit the continuance of the Union as a primary object of patriotic desire. Is there a doubt whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere? Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal. We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions will afford a happy issue to the experiment. It is well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to union affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those who, in any quarter, may endeavor to weaken its bands.

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our union, it occurs as matter of serious concern, that any



ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations — northern and southern — Atlantic and western, whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart burnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. The inhabitants of our western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head. They have seen, in the negotiation by the executive and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that even throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the general government and in the Atlantic States, unfriendly to their interests in regard to the Mississippi. They have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties, that with Great Britain and that with Spain, which secure to them everything they could desire in respect to our foreign relations toward confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the Union by which they were procured? Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren and connect them with aliens?

To the efficacy and permanency of your Union a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliances, however strict, between the parts can be an adequate substitute; they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced.

Sensible of this momentous truth you have improved upon your first essay by the adoption of a constitution of government, better calculated than your former, for an intimate union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns. This government, the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendments, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty. The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the constitution which at any time exists, until changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish a government, presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberations and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small, but artful and enterprising minority of the community, and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome

plans, digested by common councils and modified by mutual interests.

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterward the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.

Toward the preservation of your government and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the prettexts. One method of assault may be to effect in the forms of the constitution alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true characters of governments as of other human institutions—that experience is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country—that facility in changes upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion exposes to perpetual change from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion—and remember, especially, that for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the

enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed, but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual, and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation on the ruins of public liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight) the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils and en-

feeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foment occasional riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself, through the channel of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This, within certain limits, is probably true, and in governments of a monarchical cast patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose, and, there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those intrusted with its administration to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding, in the exercise of the powers of one department, to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominate in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and



distributing it into different depositories and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions of the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern, some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation, for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance, in permanent evil, any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles.

It is substantially true, that virtue or morality is a neces-



sary spring of popular government. This rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible, avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also, that timely disbursements to prepare for danger, frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it; avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertions in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should co-operate. To facilitate to them the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind, that toward the payment of debts there must be revenue; that to have revenue there must be taxes; that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant; that the intrinsic embarrassment inseparable from the selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties), ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtain-

ing revenue, which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.

Observe good faith and justice toward all nations, cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct, and can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt, that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be, that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded, and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings toward all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage and to be haughty and intractable when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.

Hence, frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity and

adopts through passion what reason would reject ; at other times it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty of nations has been the victim.

So, likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducements or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others, which are apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions by unnecessary parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld, and it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation), facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity, gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation to a commendable deference for public opinion or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils ! Such an attachment of a small or weak, toward a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens), the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial, else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote, relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance, when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupu-

lously respected, when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation, when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it, for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary, and would be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony and a liberal intercourse with all nations are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand, neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing and diversifying, by gentle means, the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing; establishing, with powers so disposed—in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them—conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual

opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate, constantly keeping in view that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that by such acceptance it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit; to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue; to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism, this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare by which they have been dictated.

How far, in the discharge of my official duties, I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself the assurance of my own conscience is that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe my proclamation of the 22d of April, 1793, is the index to my



plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice and by that of your representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and interest to take, a neutral position. Having taken it I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it with moderation, perseverance, and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity toward other nations.

The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me a predominant motive has been to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions and to progress, without interruption, to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanely speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

Though in reviewing the incidents of my administration I am unconscious of intentional error, I am, nevertheless, too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the

evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence, and, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service, with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love toward it, which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize, without alloy, the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow-citizens, the benign influence of good laws under a free government, the ever favorite object of my heart and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors, and dangers.

UNITED STATES, *September 17, 1796.*

The sentiments of veneration with which this farewell address was generally received were manifested in almost every part of the Union. Some of the State Legislatures directed it to be inserted at large in their journals, and nearly all of them passed resolutions expressing their respect for the person of the President, their high sense of his exalted services, and the emotions with which they contemplated his retirement from office. Although the leaders of party might rejoice at this event it produced solemn and anxious reflections in the great body, even of those who belonged to the opposition.

The person in whom alone the voice of the people could be united having declined a re-election, the two great parties in America brought forward their respective chiefs, and every possible effort was made by each to obtain the victory. Mr. John Adams and Mr. Thomas Pinckney, the late minister at London, were supported as

President and Vice-President by the Federalists; the whole force of the opposite party was exerted in favor of Mr. Jefferson.

Motives of vast influence were added on this occasion to those which usually impel men in a struggle to retain or acquire power. The continuance or the change, not only of those principles on which the internal affairs of the United States had been administered, but of the conduct which had been observed toward foreign nations, was believed to depend on the choice of a chief magistrate. By one party the system of neutrality pursued by the existing administration with regard to the belligerent European powers, had been uniformly approved; by the other it had been as uniformly condemned. In the contests, therefore, which preceded the choice of electors, the justice of the complaints which were made on the part of the French republic were minutely discussed, and the consequences which were to be apprehended from her resentment or from yielding to her pretensions were reciprocally urged as considerations entitled to great weight in the ensuing election.

In such a struggle it was not to be expected that foreign powers could feel absolutely unconcerned. In November, while the parties were so balanced that neither scale could be perceived to preponderate, Mr. Adet addressed a letter to Colonel Pickering, the Secretary of State, in which he recapitulated the numerous complaints which had been urged by himself and his predecessors against the government of the United States, and reproached that government in terms of great asperity with violating those treaties which had secured its independence, with ingratitude to France, and with partiality to England. These wrongs, which commenced with the "insidious" proclamation of neutrality, were said to be so aggra-

vated by the treaty concluded with Great Britain that Mr. Adet announced the orders of the Directory to suspend his ministerial functions with the Federal government. "But the cause," he added, "which has so long restrained the just resentment of the Executive Directory from bursting forth, now tempered its effects. The name of America, notwithstanding the wrongs of its government, still excited sweet sensations in the hearts of Frenchmen, and the Executive Directory wished not to break with a people whom they loved to salute with the appellation of friend." This suspension of his functions, therefore, was not to be regarded "as a rupture between France and the United States, but as a mark of just discontent, which was to last until the government of the United States returned to sentiments and to measures more conformable to the interests of the alliance, and to the sworn friendship between the two nations." "Let your government return to itself," concluded Mr. Adet, "and you will still find in Frenchmen faithful friends and generous allies."

As if to remove any possible doubt respecting the purpose for which this extraordinary letter was written, a copy was transmitted, on the day of its date, to a printer for publication.

This open and direct appeal of a foreign minister to the American people, in the critical moment of their election of a chief magistrate, did not effect its object. Reflecting men, even among those who had condemned the course of the administration, could not approve this interference in the internal affairs of the United States, and the opposite party resented it as an attempt to control the operations of the American people in the exercise of one of the highest acts of sovereignty, and to poison the fountain of their liberty and independence by mingling foreign intrigue with their elections. The reader of history, how-

ever, is familiar with the fact that the course of Adet in this affair was in strict accordance with the uniform practice of the new rulers of France at that time. Their agents endeavored to prejudice the people of every country in Europe against their respective governments, and never hesitated to interfere directly between the people and the government, wherever there was any prospect of introducing French ascendancy by such proceedings. The people of the United States, on the present occasion, resented the officious interference of Adet in the pending election as a gross insult, and it undoubtedly aided the party which it was intended to defeat. Congress met on the 5th of December (1796). There was not a sufficient number of senators present on that day to form a quorum. In the House of Representatives, among the new members who presented themselves was Andrew Jackson, from Tennessee, the future President of the United States.

On the 7th of December Washington, for the last time, met the national Legislature in the hall of the House of Representatives. His address was comprehensive, temperate, and dignified. No personal consideration could restrain him from recommending those great national measures which he believed would be useful to his country, although open and extensive hostility had been avowed to them.

After presenting a full view of the situation of the United States and the late transactions of the executive, he added: "To an active external commerce the protection of a naval force is indispensable—this is manifest with regard to wars in which a State is itself a party; but, besides this, it is in our own experience that the most sincere neutrality is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of nations at war. To secure respect to a neutral flag requires a naval force, organized and ready to vindicate it from

insult or aggression; this may even prevent the necessity of going to war by discouraging belligerent powers from committing such violations of the rights of the neutral party as may, first or last, leave no other option. From the best information I have been able to obtain, it would seem as if our trade to the Mediterranean, without a protecting force, will always be insecure, and our citizens exposed to the calamities from which numbers of them have but just been relieved."

The speech next proceeded earnestly to recommend the establishment of national works for manufacturing such articles as were necessary for the defense of the country, and also for an institution which should grow up under the patronage of the public and be devoted to the improvement of agriculture. The advantages of a military academy and of a national university were also urged, and the necessity of augmenting the compensation to the officers of the United States in various instances was explicitly stated.

The President, in adverting to the dissatisfaction which had been expressed by one of the great powers of Europe, said: "It is with much pain and deep regret I mention that circumstances of a very unwelcome nature have lately occurred. Our trade has suffered, and is suffering, extensive injuries in the West Indies from the cruisers and agents of the French republic, and communications have been received from its minister here which indicate the danger of a further disturbance of our commerce by its authority."

After stating his constant and earnest endeavors to maintain cordial harmony and a perfectly friendly understanding with that republic, and that his wish to maintain them remained unabated, he added: "In pursuing this course, however, I cannot forget what is due to the character of



our government and nation, or to a full and entire confidence in the good sense, patriotism, self-respect, and fortitude of my countrymen."

After some other communications, the speech was concluded in the following terms:

"The situation in which I now stand, for the last time, in the midst of the representatives of the people of the United States, naturally recalls the period when the administration of the present form of government commenced; and I cannot omit the occasion to congratulate you and my country on the success of the experiment, nor to repeat my fervent supplications to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe and Sovereign Arbiter of Nations that His providential care may still be extended to the United States; that the virtue and happiness of the people may be preserved, and that the government which they have instituted for their protection may be perpetual."

The answer of the Senate embraced the various topics of the speech and approved all the sentiments it contained.

It expressed the ardent attachment of that body to their chief magistrate, and its conviction that much of the public prosperity was to be ascribed to the virtue, firmness, and talents of his administration. After expressing the deep and sincere regret with which the official ratification of his intention to retire from the public employments of his country was received, the address proceeded to say: "The most effectual consolation that can offer for the loss we are about to sustain arises from the animating reflection that the influence of your example will extend to your successors, and the United States thus continue to enjoy an able, upright, and energetic administration."

In the House of Representatives a committee of five had been appointed to prepare a respectful answer to the speech, three of whom were friends to the administration.

Hoping that the disposition would be general to avow in strong terms their attachment to the person and character of the President, the committee united in reporting an answer which promised, in general terms, due attention to the various subjects recommended to their consideration, but was full and explicit in the expression of attachment to himself and of approbation of his administration.

The unanimity which prevailed in the committee did not extend to the House.

After amplifying and strengthening the expressions of the report, which stated regret that any interruption should have taken place in the harmony which had subsisted between the United States and France, and modifying those which declared their hope for the restoration of that harmony, so as to avoid any implication that its rupture was exclusively ascribable to France, a motion was made by Mr. Giles to expunge all those paragraphs which expressed attachment to the person and character of the President, approbation of his administration, or regret at his retiring from office.

After a very animated debate the motion to strike out was lost and the answer was carried by a great majority.

Early in the session Washington communicated to Congress the copy of a letter addressed by the Secretary of State to General Pinckney, containing a minute and comprehensive detail of all the points of controversy which had arisen between the United States and France, and defending the measures which had been adopted by America with a clearness and a strength of argument believed to be irresistible. The letter was intended to enable General Pinckney to remove from the government of France all impressions unfavorable to the fairness of intention which had influenced the conduct of the United States, and to efface from the bosoms of the great body of the American

people all those unjust and injurious suspicions which had been entertained against their own administration. Should its immediate operation on the executive of France disappoint his hopes, Washington persuaded himself that he could not mistake its influence in America; and he felt the most entire conviction that the accusations made by the French Directory against the United States would cease, with the evidence that these accusations were supported by a great portion of the American people.

The letter and its accompanying documents were communicated to the public, but, unfortunately, their effect at home was not such as had been expected, and they were, consequently, inoperative abroad.

The measures recommended by Washington, in his speech at the opening of the session, were not adopted, and neither the debates in Congress nor the party publications with which the nation continued to be agitated, furnished reasonable ground for hope that the political intemperance which had prevailed from the establishment of the republican form of government in France, was about to be succeeded by a more conciliatory spirit.

It was impossible for Washington to be absolutely insensible to the bitter invectives and malignant calumnies of which he had long been the object. Yet in one instance only did he depart from the rule he had prescribed for his conduct regarding them. Apprehending permanent injury from the republication of certain spurious letters, which have been already noticed, he, on the day which terminated his official character, addressed a letter to the Secretary of State, declaring them to be forgeries and stating the circumstances under which they were published.

On the 8th of February (1797) the votes for the President and Vice-President were opened and counted in the presence of both Houses, and John Adams announced the

fact from the chair of the Vice-President that he himself had received 71 votes, Thomas Jefferson 68, Thomas Pinckney 59, Aaron Burr 30, and that the balance of the votes were given in varying small numbers to Samuel Adams, Oliver Ellsworth, John Jay, etc. The total number of electors was 138. Thus John Adams became the second President of the United States, and by some mismanagement on the part of the Federalists Pinckney missed the Vice-Presidency, and the man of all others most dreaded by the Federal party was placed in the very front rank of the Republicans, and with the clear presage of success in the future.

Washington's feelings on the immediate prospect of retirement from office are expressed in the following extract from a letter to General Knox, dated March 2, 1797:

"To the wearied traveler who sees a resting-place and is bending his body to lean thereon, I now compare myself, but to be suffered to do this in peace is too much to be endured by some. To misrepresent my motives, to reprobate my politics, and to weaken the confidence which has been reposed in my administration are objects which cannot be relinquished by those who will be satisfied with nothing short of a change in our political system. The consolation, however, which results from conscious rectitude and the approving voice of my country, unequivocally expressed by its representatives, deprive their sting of its poison and place in the same point of view both the weakness and malignity of their efforts.

"Although the prospect of retirement is most grateful to my soul, and I have not a wish to mix again in the great world or to partake in its politics, yet I am not without my regrets at parting with (perhaps never more to meet) the few intimates whom I love. Among these, be assured, you are one."

Bishop White has given the following anecdote, illustrating the strong feelings of regret awakened among Washington's friends by his approaching retirement from public life :

" On the day before President Washington retired from office a large company dined with him. Among them were the foreign ministers and their ladies, Mr. and Mrs. Adams, Mr. Jefferson, and other conspicuous persons of both sexes. During the dinner much hilarity prevailed, but on the removal of the cloth it was put an end to by the President, certainly without design. Having filled his glass, he addressed the company, with a smile, as nearly as can be recollected, in the following words: ' Ladies and gentlemen, this is the last time I shall drink your health as a public man. I do it with sincerity, wishing you all possible happiness.' There was an end of all pleasantry. He who gives this relation accidentally directed his eye to the lady of the British minister, Mrs. Liston, and tears were running down her cheeks."

Mr. Gibbs, in his "Administrations of Washington and Adams," refers to the parting levee in the following terms :

" Just before his final retirement, Washington held his last formal levee. An occasion more respectable in simplicity, more imposing in dignity, more affecting in the sensations which it awakened, the ceremonials of rulers never exhibited. There were the great chiefs of the republic of all parties and opinions; veterans of the War of Independence, weather-stained and scarred; white-haired statesmen, who, in retirement, were enjoying the fruits of former toil; there were his executive counsellors and private friends; ministers of foreign governments, whose veneration approached that of his countrymen; citizens who came to offer the tribute of a respect, sincere and disinterested. Little was there of the pageantry of courts, lit-

tle of the glitter which attends the receptions of royalty, yet in the grave assemblage that stood in that unadorned chamber there was a majesty which these knew not. The dignitaries of a nation had come together to bid farewell to one who, at their own free call, by their own willing trust—not as an honor to be coveted, but as a duty to be discharged—had, in turn, led their armies and executed their laws; one who now, his last task worthily fulfilled, was to take his place again among them, readier to relinquish than he had been to undertake power; a soldier without stain upon his arms; a ruler without personal ambition; a wise and upright statesman; a citizen of self-sacrificing patriotism; a man pure, unblemished, and true in every relation he had filled; one to whom all ages should point as the testimony that virtue and greatness had been and could be united.

“And he who was the object of this gathering—what thoughts crowded upon his mind; what recollections filled the vista of the sixty odd years which had passed over him; what changes of men, opinions, society, had he seen! Great changes, indeed, in the world and its old notions; the growing dissatisfaction of certain English emigrants at customary tyrannies and new intended ones had taken form and shape, embodied itself into principles, and vindicated them; blazed up an alarming beacon in the world’s eyes as the Sacred Right of Rebellion; fought battles; asserted independence and maintained it at much cost of bloodshed; made governments after its own new-fangled fashion; impressed a most unwilling idea on history—the doctrine of popular sovereignty—one which had proved contagious and had been adopted elsewhere, running riot indeed in its novelty. And out of all this confusion there had arisen the nation which he had presided over, already become great, and factious in its greatness, with a noble



birthright, noble virtues, energies, and intellect; with great faults and passions that, unchecked, would, as in lusty individual manhood, lead to its ruin.

“What was to be the future of that nation? Dark clouds hung over it, dangers threatened it, enemies frowned upon it—the worst enemy was within. License might blast, in a few hours, the growth of years; faction destroy the careful work of the founders. On this he had left his great solemn charge, like the last warning of a father to his children.”

The relation in which the secretaries had stood with the President had been one of respectful but affectionate intimacy. The most cordial and unreserved friendship was extended to all whom he trusted and esteemed. The Secretaries of State and War (Pickering and McHenry) had been his fellow-soldiers; the Secretary of the Treasury (Wolcott) had, as it were, grown up under his eye. The simplicity and military frankness of Pickering, the kindly nature and refinement of McHenry, the warm-heartedness and *bonhomie* of Wolcott, all won upon his regard. On their part there was a no less sincere love for their chief. There are those devotion to whom is no degradation. Washington was such a one, and to him it was rendered in the spirit of men who respected themselves. Among all connected with him, either in military or civil life, this sentiment was retained. His death hallowed his memory in their hearts to a degree and with a sanctity which none can know who have not heard from their own lips—none can feel who were not of them. And in likewise the wife and family of Washington were cherished. They had been universally beloved on their own account, and the hand of fate, in depriving them of a husband and father, as it were, bequeathed them to the tender care of a nation. There was something beautiful in these sentiments, in a land

where the ties that bind men depend so little upon association.

Wolcott, among others, had enjoyed much of the domestic society of the President's house. His gentle and graceful wife had been regarded with maternal tenderness by Mrs. Washington and was the friend and correspondent of her eldest daughter. His child had been used to climb, confident of welcome, the knees of the chief, and though so many years his junior, while Wolcott's character and judgment had been held in respect by the President, his personal and social qualities had drawn toward him a warm degree of interest.

On leaving the seat of government, Washington presented, it is believed, to all his chief officers some token of regard. To Wolcott he gave a piece of plate. Mrs. Washington gave to his wife, when visiting her for the last time, a relic still more interesting. Asking her if she did not wish for a memorial of the general, Mrs. Wolcott replied, "Yes," she "should like a lock of his hair." Mrs. Washington, smiling, took her scissors and cut off for her a lock of her husband's and one of her own. These, with the originals of Washington's letters, Wolcott preserved with careful veneration and divided between his surviving children.

"On the retirement of General Washington," says Wolcott, "being desirous that my personal interests should not embarrass his successor, and supposing that some other person might be preferred to myself, I tendered my resignation to Mr. Adams before his inauguration. The tender was declined and I retained office under my former commission."

On the 1st of March (1797) Washington had addressed a note to the Senate, desiring them to attend in their chamber on Saturday, the 4th, at 10 o'clock, "to receive any

communication which the President of the United States might lay before them touching their interests." In conformity with this summons the Senate assembled on that day and commenced their thirteenth session. The oath of office was administered by Mr. Bingham to Mr. Jefferson, who thereupon took the chair. The new Senators were then sworn and the Vice-President delivered a brief address. The Senate then repaired to the chamber of the House of Representatives to attend the administration of the oath of office to the new President. Mr. Adams entered, accompanied by the heads of departments,\* the marshal of the district and his officers, and took his seat in the speaker's chair. The Vice-President and secretary of the Senate were seated in advance on his right, and the late speaker and clerk on the left; the justices of the Supreme Court sat before the President, the foreign ministers and members of the House in their usual seats. Washington, once more a private citizen, sat in front of the judges.

Mr. Adams then rose and delivered his inaugural speech. This address was brief and well suited to the occasion. After adverting to the circumstances which led to the formation of the new constitution, he expressed the unqualified approbation with which, in a foreign land and apart from the scene of controversy, he had first perused it, and the undiminished confidence which, after eight years of experience, he entertained of its fitness. He remarked briefly on the abuses to which it was subject, and against which it became the duty of the people to guard, and having disclosed his opinions of general policy, pledged him-

\*All the Cabinet officers of Washington were retained by Mr. Adams, viz.: Timothy Pickering, Secretary of State; James McHenry, Secretary of War; Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, and Charles Lee, Attorney-General. The navy department was not organized till 1798.

self anew to the support of the government. The oath of office was then administered by Chief Justice Ellsworth, the other justices attending, after which he retired.\*

The citizens of Philadelphia celebrated the day of Adams' inauguration by a testimony of their respect and affection for Washington. They prepared a magnificent entertainment, designed for him as the principal guest, to which were invited the foreign ministers, the members of the Cabinet, officers of the army and navy, and other distinguished persons.

In the rotunda in which it was given, an elegant complement was prepared for the principal guest, which is thus described in the papers of the day:

"Upon entering the area, the general was conducted to his seat. On a signal given music played Washington's march, and a scene which represented simple objects in the rear of the principal seat was drawn up and discovered emblematical painting.

"The principal was a female figure, large as life, representing America, seated on an elevation composed of sixteen marble steps. At her left side stood the Federal shield and eagle, and at her feet lay the cornucopiæ, in her right hand she held the Indian calumet of peace supporting the cap of liberty; in the perspective appeared the temple of fame, and on her left hand an altar dedicated to public gratitude, upon which incense was burning. In her left hand she held a scroll inscribed Valedictory, and at the foot of the altar lay a plumed helmet and sword, from which a figure of General Washington, large as life, appeared, retiring down the steps, pointing with his right hand to the emblems of power which he had resigned, and with his left to a beautiful landscape representing Mount

\* Gibbs, "Administrations of Washington and John Adams."

Vernon, in front of which oxen were seen harnessed to the plough. Over the general appeared a Genius, placing a wreath of laurels on his head."

After Washington had paid to his successor those respectful compliments which he believed to be equally due to the man and to the office, he hastened to that real felicity which awaited him at Mount Vernon, the enjoyment of which he had long impatiently anticipated.

The same marks of respect and affection for his person which had on all great occasions been manifested by his fellow-citizens, still attended him. His endeavors to render his journey private were unavailing, and the gentlemen of the country through which he passed, were still ambitious of testifying their sentiments for the man who had, from the birth of the Republic been deemed the first of American citizens. Long after his retirement he continued to receive addresses from legislative bodies and various classes of citizens, expressive of the high sense entertained of his services.

"Notwithstanding the extraordinary popularity of the first President of the United States," says Marshall, "scarcely has any important act of his administration escaped the most bitter invective.

"On the real wisdom of the system which he pursued, every reader will decide for himself. Time will, in some measure, dissipate the prejudices and passions of the moment, and enable us to view objects through a medium which represents them truly.

"Without taking a full review of measures which were reprobated by one party and applauded by the other, the reader may be requested to glance his eye at the situation of the United States in 1797, and to contrast it with their condition in 1788.

"At home a sound credit had been created; an immense

floating debt had been funded in a manner perfectly satisfactory to the creditors; an ample revenue had been provided; those difficulties which a system of internal taxation, on its first introduction, is doomed to encounter, were completely removed, and the authority of the government was firmly established. Funds for the gradual payment of the debt had been provided; a considerable part of it had been actually discharged, and that system which is now operating its entire extinction had been matured and adopted. The agricultural and commercial wealth of the nation had increased beyond all former example. The numerous tribes of warlike Indians, inhabiting those immense tracts which lie between the then cultivated country of the Mississippi, had been taught, by arms and by justice, to respect the United States and to continue in peace. This desirable object having been accomplished, that humane system was established for civilizing and furnishing them with the conveniences of life, which improves their condition, while it secures their attachment.

“Abroad, the differences with Spain had been accommodated, and the free navigation of the Mississippi had been acquired, with the use of New Orleans as a place of deposit for three years, and afterward, until some other equivalent place should be designated. Those causes of mutual exasperation which had threatened to involve the United States in a war with the greatest maritime and commercial power in the world, had been removed, and the military posts which had been occupied within their territory, from their existence as a nation, had been evacuated. Treaties had been formed with Algiers and with Tripoli, and no captures appear to have been made by Tunis, so that the Mediterranean was opened to American vessels.

“This bright prospect was indeed, in part, shaded by the



discontents of France. Those who have attended to the particular points of difference between the two nations will assign the causes to which these discontents are to be ascribed, and will judge whether it was in the power of the President to have avoided them without surrendering the real independence of the nation and the most invaluable of all rights — the right of self-government."

Such was the situation of the United States at the close of Washington's administration. Their circumstances at its commencement will be recollected, and the contrast is too striking not to be observed. That this beneficial change in the affairs of America is to be ascribed exclusively to the wisdom which guided the national councils will not be pretended. That many of the causes which produced it originated with the government, and that their successful operation was facilitated, if not secured, by the system which was adopted, will scarcely be denied. To estimate that system correctly, their real influence must be allowed to those strong prejudices and turbulent passions with which it was assailed.

Accustomed, in the early part of his life, to agricultural pursuits, and possessing a real taste for them, Washington was particularly well qualified to enjoy, in retirement, that tranquil felicity which he had anticipated. Resuming former habits, and returning to ancient and well-known employments, he was familiar with his new situation, and therefore exempt from the danger of that disappointment which is the common lot of those who, in old age, retire from the toils of business, or the cares of office, to the untried pleasures of the country. A large estate, which exhibited many proofs of having been long deprived of the attentions of its proprietor in the management and improvement of which he engaged with ardor, an extensive correspondence, and the society of men and books, gave

employment to every hour which was equally innocent and interesting, and furnished ground for the hope that the evening of a life which had been devoted to the public service, would be as serene as its midday had been brilliant.

In his journey from Philadelphia to Mount Vernon Washington was accompanied by Mrs. Washington, Miss Custis, George Washington Lafayette, eldest son of the general, and M. Frestel, young Lafayette's tutor.

Writing to Mr. McHenry, Secretary of War, from Mount Vernon, April 3, 1797, he thus describes his return home and his situation there:

"We got home without accident and found the roads dryer and better than I ever found them at that season of the year. The attentions we met with on our journey were very flattering, and, to some, whose minds are differently formed from mine, would have been highly relished; but I avoided, in every instance, where I had any previous knowledge of the intention, and could by earnest entreaties prevail, all parade and escorts. Mrs. Washington took a violent cold in Philadelphia, which hangs upon her still, but it is not as bad as it has been.\*

"I find myself in the situation nearly of a new beginner, for, although I have not houses to build (except one, which

\* The following extract is from a Baltimore paper, dated March 13th: "Last evening arrived in this city, on his way to Mount Vernon, the illustrious object of veneration and gratitude, George Washington. His Excellency was accompanied by his lady and Miss Custis, and by the son of the unfortunate Lafayette and his preceptor. At a distance from the city, he was met by a crowd of citizens, on horse and foot, who thronged the road to greet him, and by a detachment from Captain Hollingsworth's troop, who escorted him in through as great a concourse of people as Baltimore ever witnessed. On alighting at the Fountain Inn, the general was saluted with reiterated and thundering huzzas from the spectators. His Excellency, with the companions of his journey, leaves town, we understand, this morning."

I must erect for the accommodation and security of my military, civil, and private papers, which are voluminous, and may be interesting), yet I have scarcely anything else about me that does not require considerable repairs. In a word, I am already surrounded by joiners, masons, and painters, and, such is my anxiety to get out of their hands, that I have scarcely a room to put a friend into or to sit in myself without the music of hammers or the odoriferous scent of paint."

To Mr. Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, he writes:

"For myself, having turned aside from the broad walks of political into the narrow paths of private life, I shall leave it with those whose duty it is to consider subjects of this sort, and, as every good citizen ought to do, conform to whatsoever the ruling powers shall decide. To make and sell a little flour annually, to repair houses (going fast to ruin), to build one for the security of my papers of a public nature, and to amuse myself in agricultural and rural pursuits, will constitute employment for the few years I have to remain on this terrestrial globe. If, also, I could now and then meet the friends I esteem, it would fill the measure and add zest to my enjoyments; but, if ever this happens, it must be under my own vine and fig-tree, as I do not think it probable that I shall go beyond twenty miles from them."

To another correspondent he repeats the same interesting sentiments, in reference to his retirement and the happiness he found in it:

"Retired from noise myself, and the responsibility attached to public employment, my hours will glide smoothly on. My best wishes, however, for the prosperity of our country will always have the first place in my thoughts; while to repair buildings and to cultivate my farms, which require close attention, will occupy the few years, perhaps

days, I may be a sojourner here, as I am now in the sixty-sixth year of my peregrination through life."

In a letter to Mr. McHenry, May 29th, he says:

"I begin my diurnal course with the sun; if my hirelings are not in their places at that time, I send them messages of sorrow for their indisposition; having put these wheels in motion, I examine the state of things further. The more they are probed the deeper I find the wounds which my buildings have sustained by an absence and neglect of eight years; by the time I have accomplished these matters, breakfast (a little after 7 o'clock) is ready; this being over, I mount my horse and ride round my farms, which employs me until it is time to dress for dinner, at which I rarely miss seeing strange faces—come, as they say, out of respect for me. Pray, would not the word curiosity answer as well? And how different this from having a few social friends at a cheerful board! The usual time of setting at table, a walk, and tea bring me within the dawn of candle-light, previous to which, if not prevented by company, I resolve that, as soon as the glimmering taper supplies the place of the great luminary, I will retire to my writing table and acknowledge the letters I have received; but, when the lights are brought, I feel tired and disinclined to engage in this work, conceiving that the next night will do as well. The next night comes, and with it, the same causes for postponement, and so on.

"This will account for your letter remaining so long unacknowledged; and, having given you the history of a day, it will serve for a year, and I am persuaded you will not require a second edition of it. But it may strike you, that in this detail no mention is made of any portion of time allotted for reading. The remark would be just, for I have not looked into a book since I came home; nor shall I be able to do it until I have discharged my workmen,

probably not before the nights grow longer, when, possibly, I may be looking in Doomsday Book. At present I shall only add, that I am always and affectionately yours."

The celebrated Mr. (afterward Lord) Erskine, having sent Washington a copy of his "View of the Causes and Consequences of the Present War with France," he acknowledged it in a letter, of which the following is a part:

"To have so conducted my steps in the intricate walks of public life, and through a long course, as to meet the approbation of my country and the esteem of good men, is, next to the consciousness of having acted in all things from my best judgment, the highest gratification of which my mind is susceptible, and will, during the remainder of a life which is hastening to an end, and in moments of retirement better adapted to calm reflection than I have hitherto experienced, alleviate the pain and soften any cares, which are yet to be encountered, though hid from me at the present.

"For me to express my sentiments with respect to the administration of the concerns of another government might incur a charge of stepping beyond the line of prudence; but the principles of humanity will justify an avowal of my regret, and I do regret exceedingly, that any causes whatever should have produced and continued until this time, a war, more bloody, more expensive, more calamitous, and more pregnant with events than modern, or perhaps any other times can furnish an example of. And I most sincerely and devoutly wish that your exertions, and those of others having the same object in view, may effect what human nature cries aloud for, a general peace."\*

\* Erskine's opinion of Washington is thus expressed in his letter, dated London, March 15, 1795: "I have taken the liberty," he writes, "to introduce your august and immortal name in a

His correspondence with the Earl of Radnor shows the estimation in which he was held abroad, and also illustrates his situation and feelings at the time.

*“ To General Washington.*

“ SIR.— Though of necessity a stranger to you, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction, among the many who will, probably, even from this country, intrude upon your retirement, of offering to you my congratulations on your withdrawing yourself from the scene of public affairs, with a character which appears to be perfectly unrivalled in history. The voluntary resignation of authority, wielded, as it was, while you thought fit to yield it, for the advantage of your country, in the universal opinion of mankind, confirms the judgment I had presumed to form of your moderation, and completes the glory of your life.

“ Permit me, sir, who, enlisted in no political party, have, as a public man, looked up to you with veneration; who have seen the beginning of your career against England with approbation, because I felt England was unjust; who have seen you discontinue your hostility toward England, when, in good faith, she was no longer acting as an enemy to America, by honest counsels endeavoring to be as closely connected with amity, as she is by natural and mutual interests; who have seen you the instrument, in the hand of Providence, of wresting from the British Parliament an influence destructive of the just rights of both countries

short sentence, which will be found in the book I send you. I have a large acquaintance among the most valuable and exalted classes of men; but you are the only human being for whom I ever felt an awful reverence. I sincerely pray God to grant a long and serene evening to a life so gloriously devoted to the universal happiness of the world.

“ T. ERSKINE.”



and of establishing the independence of America, which, I am persuaded, will continually, if your principles and your wisdom shall actuate your successors, be the means of securing them respectively to us both; who have seen you, in adversity and prosperity alike, the good, the firm, the moderate, the disinterested patriot; permit me, I say, as an Englishman and as a man, to rejoice at the completion of such a character, and to offer my unfeigned wishes for a peaceful evening of your life and the realization (as is my sincere belief) of your posthumous fame and your eternal happiness.

“I have the honor to subscribe myself, etc.,

“RADNOR.

“LONGFORD CASTLE, *January 19, 1797.*”

The following is Washington's reply:

“MY LORD.—The sentiments which your lordship has been pleased to express, in your favor of the 19th of January last, relative to my public conduct, do me great honor, and I pray you to accept my grateful acknowledgment of the unequivocal evidence, conveyed in your letter, of the favorable opinion you entertain of the principles by which it was actuated.

“For having performed duties which I conceive every country has a right to require of its citizens, I claim no merit; but no man can feel more sensibly the reward of approbation for such services than I do. Next to the consciousness of having acted faithfully in discharging the several trusts to which I have been called, the thanks of one's country and the esteem of good men are the highest gratification my mind is susceptible of.

“At the age of sixty-five, I am now recommencing my agricultural and rural pursuits, which were always more congenial to my temper and disposition than the noise and

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bustle of public employments, notwithstanding so small a portion of my life has been engaged in the former.

"I reciprocate, with great cordiality, the good wishes you have been pleased to bestow on me, and pray devoutly that we may both witness, and that shortly, the return of peace; for a more bloody, expensive, and eventful war is not recorded in modern, if to be found in ancient history."

Before leaving the subject of Washington's European reputation it is proper to quote the remarks made by the celebrated orator and statesman, Charles James Fox, in the British Parliament, January 31, 1794. It was in reference to Washington's communications to Congress at the opening of the session, December 3, 1793:

"And here, sir, I cannot help alluding to the President of the United States, General Washington, a character whose conduct has been so different from that which has been pursued by the ministers of this country. How infinitely wiser must appear the spirit and principles manifested in his late address to Congress than the policy of modern European courts! Illustrious man, deriving honor less from the splendor of his situation than from the dignity of his mind; before whom all borrowed greatness sinks into insignificance, and all the potentates of Europe (excepting the members of our own royal family) become little and contemptible. He has had no occasion to have recourse to any tricks of policy or arts of alarm; his authority has been sufficiently supported by the same means by which it was acquired, and his conduct has uniformly been characterized by wisdom, moderation, and firmness. Feeling gratitude to France for the assistance received from her in that great contest which secured the independence of America, he did not choose to give up the system of neutrality. Having once laid down that line of conduct which both gratitude and policy pointed out as

most proper to be pursued, not all the insults and provocation of the French minister, Genet, could turn him from his purpose. Intrusted with the welfare of a great people, he did not allow the misconduct of another, with respect to himself, for one moment to withdraw his attention from their interest. He had no fear of the Jacobins; he felt no alarm from their principles, and considered no precaution necessary in order to stop their progress.

“The people over whom he presided he knew to be acquainted with their rights and their duties. He trusted to their own good sense to defeat the effect of those arts which might be employed to inflame or mislead their minds, and was sensible that a government could be in no danger while it retained the attachment and confidence of its subjects—attachment, in this instance, not blindly adopted; confidence not implicitly given, but arising from the conviction of its excellence and the experience of its blessings. I cannot, indeed, help admiring the wisdom and fortune of this great man. By the phrase ‘fortune,’ I mean not in the smallest degree to derogate from his merit. But notwithstanding his extraordinary talents and exalted integrity, it must be considered as singularly fortunate that he should have experienced a lot which so seldom falls to the portion of humanity, and have passed through such a variety of scenes without stain and without reproach. It must, indeed, create astonishment, that, placed in circumstances so critical, and filling for a series of years, a station so conspicuous, his character should never once have been called in question; that he should in no one instance have been accused either of improper insolence or mean submission in his transactions with foreign nations. For him it has been reserved to run the race of glory, without experiencing the smallest interruption to the brilliancy of his career.”



HENRY LAURENS.



## CHAPTER XII.

### WASHINGTON APPOINTED LIEUTENANT-GENERAL.

1797-1798.

WE have mentioned, incidentally, that George Washington Motier de Lafayette, the son of the general, with his tutor, M. Frestel, accompanied Washington on his journey from Philadelphia to Mount Vernon. When the wife and daughters of Lafayette left France to join him in the prison of Olmutz his son came to the United States. He arrived at Boston in the summer of 1795, with his tutor, and had immediately written to Washington to apprise him of his arrival. The letter was received just as he was leaving Philadelphia for Mount Vernon. Washington would have been delighted to receive him immediately into his family, but this was forbidden by political considerations of great weight. He therefore wrote to George Cabot, of Boston, desiring him to assure the young man of his friendship and protection, and recommending that he should be entered as a student at Harvard University, Cambridge, and offering to defray the expenses of his education there. This was declined, however, on account of the different course of study which he was pursuing under the tuition of M. Frestel, and George went to take up his residence with M. Lacolombe,\* in a country-house near New York. In November, 1795, Washington wrote to young Lafayette and his tutor, assur-

\* M. de Lacolombe had been adjutant-general under Lafayette, when the latter commanded the National Guard.



ing the former of his paternal regard and support, and desiring him to repair to Colonel Hamilton in New York. On the 18th of March, 1796, the following resolution and order were passed by the House of Representatives in Congress:

"Information having been given to this House that a son of General Lafayette is now within the United States;

"*Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to inquire into the truth of the said information and report thereon, and what measures it would be proper to take, if the same be true, to evince the grateful sense entertained by this country for the services of his father.

"*Ordered*, That Mr. Livingston, Mr. Sherburne, and Mr. Murray be appointed a committee pursuant to the said resolution."

As chairman of this committee, Mr. Livingston wrote to young Lafayette as follows:

"SIR.—Actuated by motives of gratitude to your father, and eager to seize every opportunity of showing their sense of his important services, the House of Representatives have passed the resolution which I have the pleasure to communicate. The committee being directed to inquire into the fact of your arrival within the United States, permit me to advise your immediate appearance at this place, that the Legislature of America may no longer be in doubt whether the son of Lafayette is under their protection and within the reach of their gratitude.

"I presume to give this advice as an individual personally attached to your father, and very solicitous to be useful to any person in whose happiness he is interested. If I should have that good fortune on this occasion, it will afford me the greatest satisfaction.

"I am, &c.,

"EDWARD LIVINGSTON."

On receiving this letter, young Lafayette wrote to Washington, inclosing the resolution and the letter of Mr. Livingston, and asking his advice relative to the course which he should pursue. The following is Washington's answer :

"Your letter of the 28th instant was received yesterday. The inclosures which accompanied it evidence much discretion, and your conduct therein meets my entire approbation.

"In the early part of this month I put a letter into the hands of Colonel Hamilton, inviting you to this place, and expected, until your letter of the above date was received, to have embraced you under my own roof to-morrow or next day.

"As the period for this seems to be more distant, from the purport of your inquiries, I again repeat my former request, and wish that, without delay, you and M. Frestel would proceed immediately to this city and to my house, where a room is prepared for you and him.

"Under expectation of your doing this, it is as unnecessary as it might be improper to go more into detail until I have the pleasure of seeing you and of rendering every service in my power to the son of my friend, for whom I have always entertained the purest affection, which is too strong not to extend itself to you. Therefore believe me to be, as I really am, sincerely and affectionately yours, &c."

From this time (March, 1796) to April, 1797, when he journeyed with Washington to Mount Vernon, young Lafayette resided with him in Philadelphia. Writing to General Dumas (June 24, 1797) from Mount Vernon, Washington, after expressing an ardent wish for the restoration of General Lafayette to liberty, says: "His son and M. Frestel, who appears to have been his mentor, are, and have been, residents in my family since their arrival in this

country, except in the first moments of it; and a modest, sensible, well-disposed youth he is."

In October, 1797, intelligence of the liberation of General Lafayette from his Austrian prison having been received, his son hastened to meet him in France. He sailed with M. Frestel from New York, on the 26th of October, bearing the following letter from Washington to his father:\*

"This letter, I hope and expect, will be presented to you by your son, who is highly deserving of such parents as you and your amiable lady.

"He can relate much better than I can describe my participation in your sufferings, my solicitude for your relief, the measures I adopted, though ineffectual, to facilitate your liberation from an unjust and cruel imprisonment, and the joy I experienced at the news of its accomplishment. I shall hasten, therefore, to congratulate you, and be assured that no one can do it with more cordiality, with more sincerity, or with greater affection, on the restoration of that liberty which every act of your life entitles you to the enjoyment of; and I hope I may add, to the uninterrupted possession of your estates and the confidence of your country. The repossession of these things, though they cannot compensate for the hardships you have endured, may nevertheless soften the painful remembrance of them.

"From the delicate and responsible situation in which I stood as a public officer, but more especially from a misconception of the manner in which your son had left France, till explained to me in a personal interview with himself, he did not come immediately into my family on his arrival in America, though he was assured in the first

\* "Sparks, "Writings of Washington."

moments of it of my protection and support. His conduct, since he first set his feet on American ground, has been exemplary in every point of view, such as has gained him the esteem, affection, and confidence of all who have had the pleasure of his acquaintance. His filial affection and duty and his ardent desire to embrace his parents and sisters, in the first moments of their release, would not allow him to wait the authentic account of this much-desired event; but, at the same time that I suggested the propriety of this, I could not withhold my assent to the gratification of his wishes to fly to the arms of those whom he holds most dear, persuaded as he is, from the information he has received, that he shall find you all in Paris.

“M. Frestel has been a true mentor to George. No parent could have been more attentive to a favorite son, and he richly merits all that can be said of his virtues, of his good sense, and of his prudence. Both your son and he carry with them the vows and regrets of this family and all who know them. And you may be assured that yourself never stood higher in the affections of the people of this country than at the present moment.

“Having bid a final adieu to the walks of public life, and meaning to withdraw myself from politics, I shall refer you to M. Frestel and George, who, at the same time that they have, from prudential considerations, avoided all interference in the politics of the country, cannot have been inattentive observers of what was passing among us, to give you a general view of our situation, and of the party which, in my opinion, has disturbed the peace and tranquillity of it. And with sentiments of the highest regard for you, your lady, and daughters, and with assurances that, if inclination or events should induce you or any of them to visit America, no person in it would receive you with more cordiality and affection than Mrs.

Washington and myself, both of us being most sincerely and affectionately attached to you, and admirers of them."

Devoted as Washington, in his retirement, was to his favorite pursuit of agriculture, he nevertheless took a lively interest in the political affairs of the country. In the events which were now passing he found cause for considerable anxiety. The conduct of the French Directory still indicated a persistence in their favorite policy of detaching the people of the United States from the support of the executive, and effecting a revolution in the government. Their treatment of General Pinckney, the minister sent to France by Washington, fully disclosed their views and intentions. After inspecting General Pinckney's letter of credence, the Directory announced to him their determination "not to receive another minister plenipotentiary from the United States until after the redress of grievances demanded of the American government, which the French republic had a right to expect from it." This message was succeeded, first by indecorous verbal communications, calculated to force the American minister out of France, and afterward, by a written mandate to quit the territories of the republic.

This act of hostility was accompanied with another, which would explain the motives for this conduct, if previous measures had not rendered all further explanation unnecessary.

On giving to the recalled minister his audience of leave, the President of the Directory addressed a speech to him, in which terms of outrage to the government were mingled with expressions of affection for the people of the United States, and the expectation of ruling the former, by their influence over the latter, was too clearly manifested not to be understood. To complete this system of hostility, American vessels were captured wherever found, and, un-

der the pretext of their wanting a document, with which the treaty of commerce had been uniformly understood to dispense, they were condemned as prize.

This serious state of things demanded a solemn consideration. On receiving from General Pinckney the dispatches which communicated it, President Adams issued his proclamation requiring Congress to meet on the 15th day of May. The speech delivered by him at the commencement of the session showed that the insults of the French Directory were deeply resented. He said: "The speech of the President discloses sentiments more alarming than the refusal of a minister, because more dangerous to our independence and union, and, at the same time, studiously marked with indignities toward the government of the United States. It evinces a disposition to separate the people from their government; to persuade them that they have different affections, principles, and interests from those of their fellow-citizens whom they themselves have chosen to manage their common concerns; and thus to produce divisions fatal to our peace. Such attempts ought to be repelled with a decision which shall convince France, and the world, that we are not a degraded people, humiliated under a colonial spirit of fear and sense of inferiority, fitted to be the miserable instruments of foreign influence, and regardless of national honor, character, and interest.

\* \* \* Retaining still the desire which had uniformly been manifested by the American government to preserve peace and friendship with all nations, and believing that neither the honor nor the interest of the United States absolutely forbade the repetition of advances for securing these desirable objects with France, he should," he said, "institute a fresh attempt at negotiation, and should not fail to promote and accelerate an accommodation on terms compatible with the rights, duties, interests, and honor



of the nation." But while he should be making these endeavors to adjust all differences with the French republic by amicable negotiation, he earnestly recommended it to Congress to provide effectual measures of defense.

The drawing up an answer to this speech of President Adams occasioned a full fortnight's debate in the House of Representatives, but at length a reply, correspondent to the President's tone and views, was carried by 51 or 52 voices against 48. This showed the balance of parties, proved that Adams still kept the ascendancy, however small, that Washington had done, and that the dread of democratic violence prevailed over the suspicions endeavored to be awakened of monarchism and an arbitrary executive. This feeling was, no doubt, strengthened greatly by refugees from St. Domingo, who related the dire effects which democratic acts had produced in that island. France, however, was never more formidable. Tidings of her victories poured in, whilst those of England told of bank payments suspended, a mutiny in the fleet, and the abandonment of her best continental ally.

To carry into effect the pacific dispositions avowed by President Adams in his speech, he appointed three envoys to the French Directory. General Pinckney, who was still residing in Europe, was placed at the head of the mission. Gen. John Marshall, afterward chief justice, a sturdy Federalist, and Elbridge Gerry, an anti-Federalist, but a strong personal friend and favorite of the President, were joined with Pinckney in the mission. They were instructed to endeavor to procure peace and reconciliation by all means compatible with the honor and faith of the United States, but no national engagements were to be impaired, no innovation to be permitted upon those internal regulations for the preservation of peace which had

been deliberately and uprightly established, nor were the rights of the government to be surrendered.

On their arrival in France the envoys saw M. Talleyrand, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, but were informed that they could not be received by the Directory. They had permission to remain in Paris, however, and the agents of M. de Talleyrand—a female amongst others—were employed to negotiate with them. The true difficulty in the way of accommodation, in addition to the impertinent arrogance of the Directory, seemed to be that Merlin and others received a great part of the gains accruing from American prizes made by the French. In order to counteract this gold in one hand by gold in the other, Talleyrand demanded a *douceur* of £50,000 for himself and chiefs, besides a loan to be afterward made from America to France. To extract these conditions, every argument that meanness could suggest was employed by Talleyrand; he demanded to be feed as a lawyer or bribed as a friend. But the Americans were inexorable, and two of their number, Pinckney and Marshall, returned to announce to their countrymen the terms on which peace was offered. The cupidity of the French government completely turned against it the tide of popular feeling in America. “Millions for defense, not a cent for tribute,” was instantly the general cry. The President felt his hands strengthened by the demands of the French. Certainly, never did minister show himself less sagacious than M. de Talleyrand in this affair, or more ignorant of the spirit and manners of a nation amongst whom he had resided.

In Congress (May, 1798), vigorous measures were adopted for placing the country in a state of defense against impending hostilities from one of the most powerful nations of the world. Among these was a regular army. A regiment of artillerists and engineers was added to the

permanent establishment, and the President was authorized to raise twelve additional regiments of infantry and one regiment of cavalry to serve during the continuance of the existing differences with the French republic, if not sooner discharged. He was also authorized to appoint officers for a provisional army and to receive and organize volunteer corps who should be exempt from ordinary militia duty, but neither the volunteers nor the officers of the provisional army were to receive pay unless called into actual service.

Addresses to the executive from every part of the United States attested the high spirit of the nation, and the answers of President Adams were well calculated to give it solidity and duration.

No sooner had a war become probable, to the perils of which no man could be insensible, than the eyes of all were directed to Washington, as the person who should command the American army. He alone could be seen at the head of a great military force without exciting jealousy; he alone could draw into public service and arrange properly the best military talents of the nation, and he, more than any other, could induce the utmost exertion of its physical strength.

Indignant at the unprovoked injuries which had been heaped upon his country, and convinced that the conflict, should a war be really prosecuted by France with a view to conquest, would be extremely severe and could be supported, on the part of America, only by a persevering exertion of all her force, he could not determine, should such a crisis arrive, to withhold those aids which it might be in his power to afford, should public opinion really attach to his services that importance which would render them essential. His own reflections appear to have resulted in a determination not to refuse once more to take

the field, provided he could be permitted to secure efficient aid by naming the chief officers of the army, and to remain at home until his service in the field should be required by actual invasion.\*

A confidential and interesting letter from Colonel Hamilton of the 19th of May, on political subjects, concludes with saying: "You ought also to be aware, my dear sir, that in the event of an open rupture with France the public voice will again call you to command the armies of your country, and though all who are attached to you will, from attachment as well as public consideration, deplore an occasion which should once more tear you from that repose to which you have so good a right, yet it is the opinion of all those with whom I converse that you will be compelled to make the sacrifice. All your past labors may demand, to give them efficacy, this further, this very great sacrifice."

"You may be assured," said Washington in reply, "that my mind is deeply impressed with the present situation of public affairs and not a little agitated by the outrageous conduct of France toward the United States, and at the inimitable conduct of those partisans who aid and abet her measures. You may believe further, from assurances equally sincere, that if there was anything in my power to be done consistently to avert or lessen the danger of the crisis, it should be rendered with hand and heart.

"But, my dear sir, dark as matters appear at present, and expedient as it is to be prepared for the worst that can happen (and no man is more disposed to this measure than I am), I cannot make up my mind yet for the expectation of open war; or, in other words, for a formidable invasion by France. I cannot believe, although I think

\* Marshall.

her capable of anything, that she will attempt to do more than she has done. When she perceives the spirit and policy of this country rising into resistance, and that she has falsely calculated upon support from a large part of the people to promote her views and influence in it, she will desist ever from those practices, unless unexpected events in Europe or the acquisition of Louisiana and the Floridas should induce her to continue them. And I believe further, that, although the leaders of their party in this country will not change their sentiments, they will be obliged to change their plan or the mode of carrying it on. The effervescence which is appearing in all quarters, and the desertion of their followers, will frown them into silence—at least for a while.

“If I did not view things in this light my mind would be infinitely more disquieted than it is, for, if a crisis should arrive when a sense of duty or a call from my country should become so imperious as to leave me no choice, I should prepare for relinquishment and go with as much reluctance from my present peaceful abode as I should go to the tombs of my ancestors.”

The opinion that prudence required preparations for open war and that Washington must once more be placed at the head of the American armies strengthened every day, and on the 22d of June President Adams addressed him a letter in which that subject was thus alluded to.

“In forming an army, whenever I must come to that extremity I am at an immense loss whether to call out the old generals or to appoint a young set. If the French come here we must learn to march with a quick step and to attack, for in that way only they are said to be vulnerable. I must tax you sometimes for advice. We must have your name, if you will in any case permit us to

use it. There will be more efficacy in it than in many an army."

A letter from McHenry, the Secretary of War, written four days afterward, concludes with asking: "May we flatter ourselves that, in a crisis so awful and important you will accept the command of all our armies? I hope you will, because you alone can unite all hearts and all hands, if it is possible that they can be united."

These letters reached Washington on the same day. The following extract from his reply to the President will exhibit the course of his reflections relative to his appearance once more at the head of the American armies:

"At the epoch of my retirement an invasion of these States by an European power, or even the probability of such an event in my days, was so far from being contemplated by me that I had no conception either that or any other occurrence would arise in so short a period which could turn my eyes from the shades of Mount Vernon. But this seems to be the age of wonders. And it is reserved for intoxicated and lawless France (for purposes of Providence far beyond the reach of human ken) to slaughter her own citizens and to disturb the repose of all the world besides. From a view of the past—from the prospect of the present—and of that which seems to be expected, it is not easy for me to decide satisfactorily on the part it might best become me to act. In case of actual invasion by a formidable force I certainly should not intrench myself under the cover of age and retirement, if my services should be required by my country to assist in repelling it. And if there be good cause to expect such an event, which certainly must be better known to the government than to private citizens, delay in preparing for it may be dangerous, improper, and not to be justified by prudence. The uncertainty, however, of the latter, in my



mind, creates my embarrassment, for I cannot bring it to believe, regardless as the French are of treaties and of the laws of nation, and capable as I conceive them to be of any species of despotism and injustice, that they will attempt to invade this country after such a uniform and unequivocal expression of the determination of the people in all parts to oppose them with their lives and fortunes. That they have been led to believe by their agents and partisans among us that we are a divided people, that the latter are opposed to their own government, and that the show of a small force would occasion a revolt, I have no doubt; and how far these men (grown desperate) will further attempt to deceive, and may succeed in keeping up the deception, is problematical. Without that, the folly of the Directory in such an attempt would, I conceive, be more conspicuous, if possible, than their wickedness.

“Having with candor made this disclosure of the state of my mind, it remains only for me to add that to those who know me best it is best known that, should imperious circumstances induce me to exchange once more the smooth paths of retirement for the thorny ways of public life, at a period too when repose is more congenial to nature, it would be productive of sensations which can be more easily conceived than expressed.”

His letter to the Secretary of War was more detailed and more explicit. “It cannot,” he said, “be necessary for me to premise to you or to others who know my sentiments; that to quit the tranquillity of retirement, and enter the boundless field of responsibility, would be productive of sensations which a better pen than I possess would find it difficult to describe. Nevertheless, the principle by which my conduct has been actuated through life would not suffer me, in any great emergency, to withhold any services I could render when required by my country—

especially in a case where its dearest rights are assailed by lawless ambition and intoxicated power, in contempt of every principle of justice, and in violation of a solemn compact and of laws which govern all civilized nations — and this too with the obvious intent to sow thick the seeds of disunion for the purpose of subjugating our government and destroying our independence and happiness.

“Under circumstances like these, accompanied by an actual invasion of our territory, it would be difficult for me, at any time, to remain an idle spectator, under the plea of age or retirement. With sorrow, it is true, I should quit the shades of my peaceful abode, and the ease and happiness I now enjoy, to encounter anew the turmoils of war, to which, possibly, my strength and powers might be found incompetent. These, however, should not be stumbling-blocks in my own way. But there are other things highly important for me to ascertain and settle before I could give a definitive answer to your question:

“1st. The propriety in the opinion of the public, so far as that opinion has been expressed in conversation, of my appearing again on the public theater after declaring the sentiments I did in my valedictory address of September, 1796.

“2dly. A conviction in my own breast, from the best information that can be obtained, that it is the wish of my country that its military force should be committed to my charge; and,

“3dly. That the army now to be formed should be so appointed as to afford a well-grounded hope of its doing honor to the country and credit to him who commands it in the field.

“On each of these heads you must allow me to make observations.”

Washington then proceeded to detail his sentiments on

those points on which his consent to take command of the army must depend.

Some casual circumstances delayed the reception of the letters of the President and Secretary of War for several days, in consequence of which, before the answer of Washington reached the seat of government, the President had nominated him to the chief command of all the armies raised or to be raised in the United States, with the rank of lieutenant-general; and the Senate had unanimously advised and consented to his appointment.

By the Secretary of War, who was directed to wait upon him with his commission, the President addressed to him the following letter:

"Mr. McHenry, the Secretary of War, will have the honor to wait on you in my behalf, to impart to you a step I have ventured to take, which I should have been happy to have communicated in person, had such a journey at this time been in my power.

"My reasons for this measure will be too well known to need any explanation to the public. Every friend and every enemy of America will comprehend them at first blush. To you, sir, I owe all the apology I can make. The urgent necessity I am in of your advice and assistance, indeed of your conduct and direction of the war, is all I can urge; and that is a sufficient justification to myself and to the world. I hope it will be so considered by yourself. Mr. McHenry will have the honor to consult you upon the organization of the army, and upon everything relating to it."

Open instructions, signed by the President, were on the same day delivered to the Secretary of War, of which the following is a copy:

"It is my desire that you embrace the first opportunity to set out on your journey to Mount Vernon and wait on

General Washington with the commission of lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief of the armies of the United States, which, by the advice and consent of the Senate, has been signed by me.

“The reasons and motives which prevailed on me to venture on such a step as the nomination of this great and illustrious character, whose voluntary resignation alone occasioned my introduction to the office I now hold, were too numerous to be detailed in this letter, and are too obvious and important to escape the observation of any part of America or Europe. But as it is a movement of great delicacy it will require all your address to communicate the subject in a manner that shall be inoffensive to his feelings and consistent with all the respect that is due from me to him.

“If the general should decline the appointment all the world will be silent and respectfully acquiesce. If he should accept it all the world, except the enemies of his country, will rejoice. If he should come to no decisive determination, but take the subject into consideration, I shall not appoint any other lieutenant-general until his conclusion is known.

“His advice in the formation of a list of officers would be extremely desirable to me. The names of Lincoln, Morgan, Knox, Hamilton, Gates, Pinckney, Lee, Carrington, Hand, Muhlenberg, Dayton, Burr, Brooks, Cobb, Smith, as well as the present commander-in-chief, may be mentioned to him, and any others that occur to you. Particularly, I wish to have his opinion on the men most suitable for inspector-general, adjutant-general, and quartermaster-general.

“His opinion on all subjects would have great weight, and I wish you to obtain from him as much of his reflections upon the times and the service as you can.”

The communications between Washington and the Secretary of War appear to have been full and unreserved. The impressions of the former respecting the critical and perilous situation of his country had previously determined him to yield to the general desire and accept the commission offered him, provided he could be permitted to select for the high departments of the army, and especially for the military staff, those in whom he could place the greatest confidence. Being assured that there was every reason to believe his wishes in this respect would not be thwarted, he gave to the secretary the arrangement which he would recommend for the principal stations in the army, and on the 13th of July addressed the following letter to the President:

“I had the honor, on the evening of the 11th instant, to receive from the hands of the Secretary at War your favor of the 7th, announcing that you had, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appointed me lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief of the armies raised or to be raised for the service of the United States.

“I cannot express how greatly affected I am at this new proof of public confidence, and at the highly flattering manner in which you have been pleased to make the communication. At the same time I must not conceal from you my earnest wish that the choice had fallen upon a man less declined in years and better qualified to encounter the usual vicissitudes of war.

“You know, sir, what calculations I had made relative to the probable course of events on my retiring from office and the determination with which I had consoled myself of closing the remnant of my days in my present peaceful abode. You will, therefore, be at no loss to conceive and appreciate the sensations I must have experienced to bring my mind to any conclusion that would pledge me at so late

a period of life to leave scenes I sincerely love to enter upon the boundless field of public action, incessant trouble, and high responsibility.

“It was not possible for me to remain ignorant of or indifferent to recent transactions. The conduct of the Directory of France toward our country; their insidious hostility to its government; their various practices to withdraw the affections of the people from it; the evident tendency of their arts, and those of their agents to countenance and invigorate opposition; their disregard of solemn treaties and the laws of nations; their war upon our defenseless commerce; their treatment of our ministers of peace, and their demands, amounting to tribute, could not fail to excite in me sentiments corresponding with those my countrymen have so generally expressed in their affectionate addresses to you.

“Believe me, sir, no man can more cordially approve the wise and prudent measures of your administration. They ought to inspire universal confidence, and will no doubt, combined with the state of things, call from Congress such laws and means as will enable you to meet the full force and extent of the crisis.

“Satisfied, therefore, that you have sincerely wished and endeavored to avert war, and exhausted to the last drop the cup of reconciliation, we can, with pure hearts, appeal to Heaven for the justice of our cause, and may confidently trust the final result to that kind Providence who has heretofore and then so often signally favored the people of the United States.

“Thinking in this manner and feeling how incumbent it is upon every person of every description to contribute at all times to his country’s welfare, and especially in a moment like the present, when everything we hold dear and sacred is so seriously threatened, I have finally determined



to accept the commission of commander-in-chief of the armies of the United States, with the reserve only that I shall not be called into the field until the army is in a situation to require my presence or it becomes indispensable by the urgency of circumstances.

“In making this reservation, I beg it to be understood that I do not mean to withhold any assistance to arrange and organize the army, which you may think I can afford. I take the liberty also to mention that I must decline having my acceptance considered as drawing after it any immediate charge upon the public, or that I can receive any emoluments annexed to the appointment before I am in a situation to incur expense.”

From this period Washington intermingled the cares and attentions of office with his agricultural pursuits. His solicitude respecting the organization of an army which he might possibly be required to lead against an enemy the most formidable in the world, was too strong to admit of his being inattentive to its arrangements.

Having stipulated, in accepting office, that he should have a concurrent voice in the appointment of the general officers and general staff of the army, he named Alexander Hamilton as inspector-general and second in command, with Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and Henry Knox as major-generals. Adams, who particularly disliked Hamilton, and was very suspicious of his designs and purposes, especially if placed in any position of power and influence, was not at all pleased with this arrangement; but he unwillingly acquiesced. General Knox was dissatisfied with the rank assigned him, and refused to serve; General Pinckney, on the other hand, accepted the post offered him.

During the months of November and December (1798), Washington was at Philadelphia, where he was busily occupied, with Hamilton and Pinckney, in concerting arrange-

ments for raising and organizing the army. From this time to the end of his life a great part of his time was bestowed upon military affairs. "His correspondence with the Secretary of War, the major-generals, and other officers," as Mr. Sparks states, "was unremitted and very full, entering into details and communicating instructions which derived value from his long experience and perfect knowledge of the subject. His letters during this period, if not the most interesting to many readers, will be regarded as models of their kind, and as affording evidence that the vigor and fertility of his mind had not decreased with declining years. \* \* \* He never seriously believed that the French would go to the extremity of invading the United States. But it had always been a maxim with him, that a timely preparation for war afforded the surest means for preserving peace, and on this occasion he acted with as much promptitude and energy as if the invaders had been actually on the coast. His opinion proved to be correct, and his prediction was verified." For the French government, when it was found that the people would support the executive in resisting aggressions, soon manifested a disposition to draw back from their war-like attitude, since war with the United States was the last thing which was really desired.

While Washington was engaged in organizing the army actual hostilities between the United States and France were going on at sea. A *navy* department was formed by act of Congress in April (1798), and on May 21st Benjamin Stoddert, of Maryland, became the first Secretary of the Navy. The frigates *United States*, 44, and *Constellation*, 38, were launched and fitted for sea in the summer and autumn succeeding; and the whole force authorized by a law passed on the 16th of July, consisted of twelve frigates, twelve ships of a force between twenty and twenty-four

guns inclusive, and six sloops, besides galleys and revenue cutters, making a total of thirty active cruisers. Numerous privateers were also fitted out. The chief theater of naval operations was the archipelago of the West Indies, where the aggressions on our commerce by French cruisers and privateers had originally commenced. Of the numerous encounters which took place, two remarkable ones afforded a promise of the future glories of the American navy. One of these was a very severe action (February, 1799) between the American frigate *Constellation*, of thirty-eight guns, commanded by Commodore Truxton, and the French frigate *l'Insurgente*, of forty guns, which terminated in the capture of the latter. Truxton, in a subsequent engagement, compelled another French frigate, the *Vengeance*, mounting no less than fifty-two guns, to strike her colors, but she afterward made her escape in the night.

The determined attitude of the United States soon convinced the French Directory that the people were united in support of the administration in its hostile operations, and Talleyrand sent certain intimations to our government, through William Vans Murray, American minister at the Hague, as well as by more private channels, that the Directory were willing and desirous to treat for peace. President Adams determined to avail himself of these friendly dispositions, and, without consulting his Cabinet or the leading members of Congress, on the 18th of February (1799) nominated to the Senate Mr. Murray as minister plenipotentiary to the French republic. Patrick Henry and Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth were subsequently appointed joint ambassadors, but the latter declining on account of ill health, Gen. William Richardson Davie, Governor of North Carolina, was appointed in his place. Ellsworth and Davie did not leave the country, however, till November. The peace which terminated the quasi war

with France was negotiated by these envoys, but it did not take place till the 3d of September, 1800, when Napoleon was at the head of affairs in France, as First Consul, and after the death of Washington.

We have seen that when Washington retired from the office of President, he had promised himself a season of leisure and repose before closing his useful and honorable life. But this the course of events did not permit. His last days were destined to be fully occupied with public affairs.

During the years 1798 and 1799 he was engaged in a most voluminous correspondence with the President, the heads of departments, and the officers of the provisional army, in relation to military affairs, and in addition to this his published letters show that he had to keep up a correspondence with many public men, both in Europe and America, as well as with his own connections and dependants.

This correspondence and the arrangement of his papers added to the writing occasioned by his accounts and the army affairs, made it necessary for him to have assistance, and he accordingly wrote to his old secretary, Mr. Tobias Lear, with a view to engaging him in the same office again (August 2, 1798). An extract from his letter to Mr. Lear shows how his writing labors had increased. "The little leisure I had," he writes, "before my late appointment (from visits, my necessary rides, and other occurrences), to overhaul, arrange, and separate papers of real from those of little or no value, is now, by that event, so much encroached upon by personal and written applications for offices, and other matters incidental to the commander-in-chief, that, without assistance, I must abandon all idea of accomplishing this necessary work before I embark in new scenes, which will render them more voluminous, and, of

course, more difficult ; a measure which would be extremely irksome to me to submit to, especially as it respects my accounts, which are yet in confusion ; my earnest wish and desire being, when I quit the stage of human action, to leave all matters in such a situation as to give as little trouble as possible to those who will have the management of them hereafter.

“Under this view of my situation, which is far from being an agreeable one, and at times fills me with deep concern when I see so little prospect of complete extrication, I have written to the Secretary of War to be informed whether—as my taking the field is contingent, and no pay or emolument will accrue to myself until then—I am at liberty to appoint my secretary immediately, who shall be allowed his pay and forage from the moment he joins me. If he answers in the affirmative, can you do this on these terms?”

Mr. Lear accepted the appointment of secretary, proceeded immediately to Mount Vernon, and remained with Washington till his decease.

With the aid of Mr. Lear, who was thoroughly conversant with his papers and accustomed to his methods of transacting business, he was enabled to keep up his old habit of riding over the estate, and superintending its culture, during the early hours of the day. “When he returned from his morning ride,” which, he remarks in a letter to Mr. McHenry, “usually occupied him till it was time to dress for dinner,” he generally found some newly arrived guests, perfect strangers to him, come, as they said, out of respect to him. They were always received courteously, but their number and their constant succession must have made serious inroads on the domestic quiet in which he so much delighted. “How different this,” he

says in the same letter, "from having a few social friends at a cheerful board."

During the last two years of his life his domestic circle was small. Mrs. Washington, Miss Custis, and some others of his adopted children, and his old friend, Mr. Lear, were at Mount Vernon; and some of his visitors were such as he himself would have chosen. But the greater part of them were comparative strangers.

Distinguished persons sometimes came from Europe to visit him, and these were received with his usual hospitality. When they sought to draw him into conversation about his own actions, he changed the subject and made inquiries about Europe and its affairs. In his own house, although maintaining toward strangers great courtesy and amenity, he always avoided discussing on matters in which he himself had played the most conspicuous part. At home he was the plain, modest country gentleman he had been before the destinies of an army and an empire had been placed in his hands.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### LAST ILLNESS, DEATH, AND CHARACTER OF WASHINGTON.

1799.

ON Thursday, December 12, 1799, Washington rode out to superintend as usual the affairs of his estate. He left the house at 10 o'clock in the morning and did not return till 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Soon after he went out the weather became very inclement, rain, hail, and snow falling alternately, with a cold wind. When he came in his secretary and superintendent, Mr. Lear, handed him some letters to frank, but he declined sending them to the post-office that evening, remarking that the weather was too bad to send a servant with them. On Mr. Lear's observing that he was afraid he had got wet, he said, No, his great coat had kept him dry. Still his neck was wet and snow was hanging on his hair. But he made light of it, and sat down to dinner without changing his dress. In the evening he appeared as well as usual.\*

A heavy snowstorm on Friday prevented his riding out on the estate as usual. He had taken cold the day before by his long exposure, and he complained of a sore throat. This, however, did not prevent his going out in the afternoon to mark some trees not far from the house, which

\* Our authority for the details of Washington's last illness and death is a statement carefully prepared by Mr. Lear at the time, and published from the original in Sparks' "Life of Washington." It is the most exact and reliable authority extant.

were to be cut down. He had now a hoarseness, which increased toward the close of the day. He spent the evening in the parlor with Mrs. Washington and Mr. Lear, perusing the newspapers, occasionally reading an interesting article aloud as well as his hoarseness would permit, and cheerful as usual. On his retiring, Mr. Lear proposed that he should take some remedy for his cold, but he answered "No, you know I never take anything for a cold. Let it go as it came."

Between 2 and 3 o'clock on Saturday morning he had an ague fit, but would not permit the family to be disturbed in their rest till daylight. He breathed with great difficulty and was hardly able to utter a word intelligibly. At his desire he was bled by Mr. Rawlins, one of the overseers. An attempt to take a simple remedy for a cold showed that he could not swallow a drop, but seemed convulsed and almost suffocated in his efforts. Dr. Craik, the family physician, was sent for and arrived about 9 o'clock, who put a blister on his throat, took some more blood from him and ordered a gargle of vinegar and sage tea, and inhalation of the fumes of vinegar and hot water. Two consulting physicians, Dr. Brown and Dr. Dick, were called in, who arrived about 3 o'clock, and after a consultation he was bled a third time. The patient could now swallow a little, and calomel and tartar emetic were administered without any effect.

About half past 4 o'clock he desired Mr. Lear to call Mrs. Washington to his bedside; when he requested her to bring from his desk two wills, and on receiving them, he gave her one, which he observed was useless as being superseded by the other, and desired her to burn it, which she did, and put the other into her closet.

"After this was done," says Mr. Lear, in concluding his touching narrative, "I returned to his bedside and took

his hand. He said to me: 'I find I am going. My breath cannot last long. I believed from the first that the disorder would prove fatal. Do you arrange and record all my late military letters and papers. Arrange my accounts and settle my books, as you know more about them than anyone else, and let Mr. Rawlins finish recording my other letters, which he has begun.' I told him this should be done. He then asked if I recollected anything which it was essential for him to do, as he had but a very short time to continue with us. I told him that I could recollect nothing which it was essential for him to do, but that I hoped he was not so near his end. He observed, *smiling*, that he certainly was, and that, as it was the debt we must all pay, he looked to the event with perfect resignation.

"In the course of the afternoon he appeared to be in great pain and distress, from the difficulty of breathing, and frequently changed his posture in the bed. On these occasions I lay upon the bed and endeavored to raise him and turn him with as much ease as possible. He appeared penetrated with gratitude for my attentions, and often said, 'I am afraid I shall fatigue you too much,' and upon assuring him that I could feel nothing but a wish to give him ease, he replied, 'Well, it is a debt we must pay to each other, and I hope when you want aid of this kind you will find it.'

"About 5 o'clock Dr. Craik came again into the room, and, upon going to the bedside, the general said to him, 'Doctor, I die hard, but I am not afraid to go. I believed, from my first attack, that I should not survive it. My breath cannot last long.' The doctor pressed his hand, but could not utter a word. He retired from the bedside and sat by the fire, absorbed in grief.

"Between 5 and 6 o'clock Dr. Craik, Dr. Dick, and Dr. Brown came again into the room, and with Dr. Craik went

to the bed, when Dr. Craik asked him if he could sit up in the bed. He held out his hand and I raised him up. He then said to the physicians, 'I feel myself going; I thank you for your attentions, but I pray you to take no more trouble about me. Let me go off quietly. I cannot last long.' They found that all which had been done was without effect. He lay down again, and all retired except Dr. Craik. He continued in the same situation, uneasy and restless, but without complaining, frequently asking what hour it was. When I helped him to move at this time he did not speak, but looked at me with strong expressions of gratitude.

"About 8 o'clock the physicians came again into the room and applied blisters and cataplasms of wheat bran to his legs and feet, after which they went out, except Dr. Craik, without a ray of hope. I went out about this time and wrote a line to Mr. Law and Mr. Peter, requesting them to come with their wives (Mrs. Washington's granddaughters) as soon as possible to Mount Vernon.

"About 10 o'clock he made several attempts to speak to me before he could effect it. At length he said, 'I am just going. Have me decently buried, and do not let my body be put into the vault in less than three days after I am dead.' I bowed assent, for I could not speak. He then looked at me again and said, 'Do you understand me?' I replied, 'Yes.' ' 'Tis well,' said he.

"About ten minutes before he expired (which was between 10 and 11 o'clock) his breathing became easier. He lay quietly; he withdrew his hand from mine and felt his own pulse. I saw his countenance change. I spoke to Dr. Craik, who sat by the fire. He came to the bedside. The general's hand fell from his wrist. I took it in mine and pressed it to my bosom. Dr. Craik put his hands over his eyes, and he expired without a struggle or a sigh (December 14, 1799).

“While we were fixed in silent grief, Mrs. Washington, who was sitting at the foot of the bed, asked, with a firm and collected voice, ‘Is he gone?’ I could not speak, but held up my hand as a signal that he was no more. ‘’Tis well,’ said she, in the same voice, ‘all is over now. I shall soon follow him. I have no more trials to pass through.’

“During his whole illness,” adds Mr. Lear, “he spoke but seldom, and with great difficulty and distress, and in so low and broken a voice as at times hardly to be understood. His patience, fortitude, and resignation never forsook him for a moment. In all his distress he uttered not a sigh nor a complaint, always endeavoring, from a sense of duty, as it appeared, to take what was offered him and to do as he was desired by the physicians.”

By this simple and touching record of the last moments of Washington, it will be perceived that his conduct, in the last trying scene, was in all respects consistent with his whole life and character. His habitual serenity and self-command, and the ever-present sense of duty, are apparent through the whole. He died as he had lived, a hero in the highest sense of the word and a true Christian.

The deep and wide-spreading grief occasioned by this melancholy event assembled a great concourse of people for the purpose of paying the last tribute of respect to the first of Americans, and on Wednesday, the 18th of December, his body, attended by military honors, and with religious and Masonic ceremonies, was deposited in the family vault on his estate.

In December, 1837, the remains of the great father of our nation, after a slumber of thirty-eight years, were again exposed by the circumstance of placing his body once and forever within the marble sarcophagus made by Mr. Struthers, of Philadelphia. The body, as Mr. Struthers related, was still in a wonderful state of preserva-

tion, the high pale brow wore a calm and serene expression, and the lips, pressed together, had a grave and solemn smile.

When intelligence reached Congress of the death of Washington, they instantly adjourned until the next day, when John Marshall, then a member of the House of Representatives and afterward chief justice of the United States and biographer of Washington, addressed the speaker in the following words:

"The melancholy event which was yesterday announced with doubt has been rendered but too certain. Our Washington is no more. The hero, the patriot, and the sage of America; the man on whom, in times of danger, every eye was turned, and all hopes were placed, lives now only in his own great actions and in the hearts of an affectionate and afflicted people.

"If, sir, it had even not been usual openly to testify respect for the memory of those whom Heaven has selected as its instruments for dispensing good to man, yet such has been the uncommon worth and such the extraordinary incidents which have marked the life of him whose loss we all deplore, that the whole American nation, impelled by the same feelings, would call with one voice for a public manifestation of that sorrow, which is so deep and so universal.

"More than any other individual, and as much as to any one individual was possible, has he contributed to found this, our wide-spreading empire, and to give to the western world independence and freedom.

"Having effected the great object for which he was placed at the head of our armies, we have seen him convert the sword into the ploughshare and sink the soldier into the citizen.

"When the debility of our Federal system had become



manifest, and the bonds which connected this vast continent were dissolving, we have seen him the chief of those patriots who formed for us a constitution, which, by preserving the Union, will, I trust, substantiate and perpetuate those blessings which our Revolution had promised to bestow.

“ In obedience to the general voice of his country, calling him to preside over a great people, we have seen him once more quit the retirement he loved, and, in a season more stormy and tempestuous than war itself, with calm and wise determination, pursue the true interests of the nation and contribute more than any other could contribute to the establishment of that system of policy which will, I trust, yet preserve our peace, our honor, and our independence. Having been twice unanimously chosen the chief magistrate of a free people, we have seen him, at a time when his re-election with universal suffrage could not be doubted, afford to the world a rare instance of moderation, by withdrawing from his high station to the peaceful walks of private life. However the public confidence may change, and the public affections fluctuate with respect to others, with respect to him they have, in war and in peace, in public and in private life, been as steady as his own firm mind and as constant as his own exalted virtues. Let us then, Mr. Speaker, pay the last tribute of respect and affection to our departed friend. Let the grand council of the nation display those sentiments which the nation feels. For this purpose I hold in my hand some resolutions which I take the liberty of offering to the House.

“ *Resolved*, That this House will wait on the President in condolence of this mournful event.

“ *Resolved*, That the speaker’s chair be shrouded with black, and that the members and officers of the House wear black during the session.

*“Resolved,* That a committee, in conjunction with one from the Senate, be appointed to consider on the most suitable manner of paying honor to the memory of the man first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his fellow-citizens.”

The Senate, on this melancholy occasion, addressed to the President the following letter:

“The Senate of the United States respectfully take leave, sir, to express to you their deep regret for the loss their country sustains in the death of Gen. George Washington.

“This event, so distressing to all our fellow-citizens, must be peculiarly heavy to you, who have long been associated with him in deeds of patriotism. Permit us, sir, to mingle our tears with yours. On this occasion it is manly to weep. To lose such a man at such a crisis is no common calamity to the world. Our country mourns a father. The Almighty Disposer of human events has taken from us our greatest benefactor and ornament. It becomes us to submit with reverence to Him ‘who maketh darkness His pavilion.’

“With patriotic pride we review the life of our Washington and compare its events with those of other countries who have been pre-eminent in fame. Ancient and modern times are diminished before him. Greatness and guilt have too often been allied, but his fame is whiter than it is brilliant. The destroyers of nations stood abashed at the majesty of his virtues. It reproved the intemperance of their ambition and darkened the splendor of victory. The scene is closed, and we are no longer anxious lest misfortune should sully his glory; he has traveled on to the end of his journey and carried with him an increasing weight of honor; he has deposited it safely where misfortune cannot tarnish it, where malice cannot blast it. Favored of

Heaven, he departed without exhibiting the weakness of humanity. Magnanimous in death, the darkness of the grave could not obscure his brightness.

"Such was the man whom we deplore. Thanks to God, his glory is consummated. Washington yet lives on earth in his spotless example; his spirit is in Heaven.

"Let his countrymen consecrate the memory of the heroic general, the patriotic statesman, and the virtuous sage. Let them teach their children never to forget that the fruits of his labors and his example are their inheritance."

To this address the President returned the following answer:

"I receive with the most respectful and affectionate sentiments, in this impressive address, the obliging expressions of your regret for the loss our country has sustained in the death of her most esteemed, beloved, and admired citizen.

"In the multitude of my thoughts and recollections on this melancholy event, you will permit me to say that I have seen him in the days of adversity, in some of the scenes of his deepest distress and most trying perplexities. I have also attended him in the highest elevation and most prosperous felicity, with uniform admiration of his wisdom, moderation, and constancy.

"Among all our original associates in that memorable league of this continent in 1774, which first expressed the sovereign will of a free nation in America, he was the only one remaining in the general government. Although with a constitution more enfeebled than his, at an age when he thought it necessary to prepare for retirement, I feel myself alone bereaved of my last brother; yet I derive a strong consolation from the unanimous disposition which

appears in all ages and classes to mingle their sorrows with mine on this common calamity to the world.

“The life of our Washington cannot suffer by a comparison with those of other countries, who have been most celebrated and exalted by fame. The attributes and decorations of royalty could only have served to eclipse the majesty of those virtues which made him, from being a modest citizen, a more resplendent luminary. Misfortune, had he lived, could hereafter have sullied his glory only with those superficial minds, who, believing that character and actions are marked by success alone, rarely deserve to enjoy it. Malice could never blast his honor, and envy made him a singular exception to her universal rule. For himself, he had lived long enough to life and to glory; for his fellow-citizens, if their prayers could have been answered, he would have been immortal; for me, his departure is at a most unfortunate moment. Trusting, however, in the wise and righteous dominion of Providence over the passions of men and the results of their actions, as well as over their lives, nothing remains for me but humble resignation.

“His example is now complete, and it will teach wisdom and virtue to magistrates, citizens, and men, not only in the present age, but in future generations, as long as our history shall be read.”

The committee of both Houses appointed to devise the mode by which the nation should express its grief reported the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

“That a marble monument be erected by the United States at the capitol of the city of Washington, and that the family of General Washington be requested to permit his body to be deposited under it, and that the monument

be so designed as to commemorate the great events of his military and political life.

“That there be a funeral from Congress Hall to the German Lutheran Church, in memory of Gen. George Washington, on Thursday, the 26th instant, and that an oration be prepared at the request of Congress, to be delivered before both Houses that day; and that the president of the Senate and speaker of the House of Representatives be desired to request one of the members of Congress to prepare and deliver the same.

“That the President of the United States be requested to direct a copy of these resolutions to be transmitted to Mrs. Washington, assuring her of the profound respect Congress will ever bear to her person and character, of their condolence on the late affecting dispensation of Providence, and entreating her assent to the interment of the remains of General Washington in the manner expressed in the first resolution.

“That the President be requested to issue his proclamation, notifying the people throughout the United States the recommendation contained in the third resolution.”

These resolutions passed both Houses unanimously, and those which would admit of immediate execution were carried into effect. The whole nation appeared in mourning. The funeral procession was grand and solemn, and the eloquent oration, which was delivered on the occasion by General Lee, was heard with profound attention and with deep interest.

Throughout the United States similar marks of affliction were exhibited. In every part of the continent funeral orations were delivered, and the best talents of the nation were devoted to an expression of the nation's grief.

To the letter of the President which transmitted to Mrs. Washington the resolutions of Congress, and of which his

secretary was the bearer, that lady answered: "Taught by the great example which I have so long had before me, never to oppose my private wishes to the public will, I must consent to the request made by Congress which you have had the goodness to transmit to me; and in doing this I need not, I cannot, say what a sacrifice of individual feeling I make to a sense of public duty."

On receiving intelligence of the death of Washington, Napoleon, then First Consul of France, issued the following order of the day to the army: "Washington is dead. This great man fought against tyranny; he established the liberty of his country. His memory will always be dear to the French people, as it will be to all freemen of the two worlds; and especially to French soldiers, who, like him and the American soldiers, have combated for liberty and equality." Napoleon ordered that during ten days black crape should be suspended from all the standards and flags throughout the republic. On the 9th of February, 1800, a splendid funeral solemnity took place in the Champ de Mars; and a funeral oration in honor of Washington was pronounced by M. de la Fontaines, in the Hotel des Invalides, at which the First Consul and the civil and military authorities were present.\*

The British admiral in command of the fleet lying at Torbay, on receiving the news of Washington's death, honored his memory by lowering his flag to half-mast; and his example was followed by the whole fleet.\*

Judge Marshall, who had enjoyed the advantage of an intimate personal acquaintance with Washington, who was one of his most steadfast political supporters, and whose able biography shows a thorough appreciation of his ex-

\* Sparks, "Life of Washington."



traordinary abilities and virtues, gives the following summary view of his character :

“General Washington was rather above the common size, his frame was robust, and his constitution vigorous — capable of enduring great fatigue and requiring a considerable degree of exercise for the preservation of his health. His exterior created in the beholder the idea of strength, united with manly gracefulness.

“His manners were rather reserved than free, though they partook nothing of that dryness and sternness which accompany reserve when carried to an extreme, and on all proper occasions he could relax sufficiently to show how highly he was gratified by the charms of conversation and the pleasures of society. His person and whole deportment exhibited an unaffected and indescribable dignity, unmingled with haughtiness, of which all who approached him were sensible ; and the attachment of those who possessed his friendship and enjoyed his intimacy was ardent, but always respectful.

“His temper was humane, benevolent, and conciliatory, but there was a quickness in his sensibility to anything apparently offensive which experience had taught him to watch, and to correct.

“In the management of his private affairs he exhibited an exact yet liberal economy. His funds were not prodigally wasted on capricious and ill-examined schemes, nor refused to beneficial though costly improvements. They remained, therefore, competent to that expensive establishment which his reputation, added to a hospitable temper, had, in some measure, imposed upon him, and to those donations which real distress has a right to claim from opulence.

“He made no pretensions to that vivacity which fascinates, or to that wit which dazzles and frequently imposes

on the understanding. More solid than brilliant, judgment rather than genius, constituted the most prominent feature of his character.

“Without making ostentatious professions of religion, he was a sincere believer in the Christian faith and a truly devout man.

“As a military man, he was brave, enterprising, and cautious. That malignity which has sought to strip him of all the higher qualities of a general, has conceded to him personal courage and a firmness of resolution which neither dangers nor difficulties could shake. But candor will allow him other great and valuable endowments. If his military course does not abound with splendid achievements, it exhibits a series of judicious measures adopted to circumstances, which probably saved his country.

“Placed, without having studied the theory or been taught in the school of experience the practice of war, at the head of an undisciplined, ill-organized multitude, which was impatient of the restraints and unacquainted with the ordinary duties of a camp, without the aid of officers possessing those lights which the Commander-in-Chief was yet to acquire, it would have been a miracle indeed had his conduct been absolutely faultless. But, possessing an energetic and distinguishing mind, on which the lessons of experience were never lost, his errors, if he committed any, were quickly repaired, and those measures which the state of things rendered most advisable were seldom, if ever, neglected. Inferior to his adversary in the numbers, in the equipment, and in the discipline of his troops, it is evidence of real merit that no great and decisive advantages were ever obtained over him, and that the opportunity to strike an important blow never passed away unused. He has been termed the American Fabius, but those who compare his actions with his means will perceive

at least as much of Marcellus as of Fabius in his character. He could not have been more enterprising without endangering the cause he defended, nor have put more to hazard without incurring justly the imputation of rashness. Not relying upon those chances which sometimes give a favorable issue to attempts apparently desperate, his conduct was regulated by calculations made upon the capacities of his army and the real situation of his country. When called a second time to command the armies of the United States a change of circumstances had taken place, and he meditated a corresponding change of conduct. In modeling the army of 1798 he sought for men distinguished for their boldness of execution, not less than for their prudence in council, and contemplated a system of continued attack. 'The enemy,' said the general in his private letters, 'must never be permitted to gain foothold on our shores.'

"In his civil administration, as in his military career, ample and repeated proofs were exhibited of that practical good sense, of that sound judgment, which is perhaps the most rare and is certainly the most valuable quality of the human mind. Devoting himself to the duties of his station, and pursuing no object distinct from the public good, he was accustomed to contemplate at a distance those critical situations in which the United States might probably be placed, and to digest, before the occasion required action, the line of conduct which it would be proper to observe.

Taught to distrust first impressions, he sought to acquire all the information which was attainable, and to hear, without prejudice, all the reasons which could be urged for or against a particular measure. His own judgment was suspended until it became necessary to determine, and his decisions, thus maturely made, were seldom if ever to be shaken. His conduct, therefore, was systematic, and the great objects of his administration were steadily pursued.

“Respecting, as the first magistrate in a free government must ever do, the real and deliberate sentiments of the people, their gusts of passion passed over, without ruffling the smooth surface of his mind. Trusting to the reflecting good sense of the nation for approbation and support, he had the magnanimity to pursue its real interests, in opposition to its temporary prejudices; and, though far from being regardless of popular favor, he could never stoop to retain, by deserving to lose it. In more instances than one we find him committing his whole popularity to hazard, and pursuing steadily, in opposition to a torrent which would have overwhelmed a man of ordinary firmness, that course which had been dictated by a sense of duty.

“In speculation he was a real republican, devoted to the constitution of his country and to that system of equal political rights on which it is founded. But between a balanced republic and a democracy the difference is like that between order and chaos. Real liberty, he thought, was to be preserved only by preserving the authority of the laws and maintaining the energy of government. Scarcely did society present two characters which, in his opinion, less resembled each other than a patriot and a demagogue.

“No man has ever appeared upon the theater of public action whose integrity was more incorruptible, or whose principles were more perfectly free from the contamination of those selfish and unworthy passions which find their nourishment in the conflicts of party. Having no views which required concealment, his real and avowed motives were the same; and his whole correspondence does not furnish a single case from which even an enemy would infer that he was capable, under any circumstances, of stooping to the employment of duplicity. No truth can be uttered with more confidence than that his ends were

always upright and his means always pure. He exhibits the rare example of a politician to whom wiles were absolutely unknown, and whose professions to foreign governments and to his own countrymen were always sincere. In him was fully exemplified the real distinction which forever exists between wisdom and cunning, and the importance as well as truth of the maxim, that 'honesty is the best policy.'

"If Washington possessed ambition that passion was, in his bosom, so regulated by principles or controlled by circumstances that it was neither vicious nor turbulent. Intrigue was never employed as the means of its gratification, nor was personal aggrandizement its object. The various high and important stations to which he was called by the public voice were unsought by himself; and, in consenting to fill them, he seems rather to have yielded to a general conviction that the interests of his country would be thereby promoted, than to an avidity for power.

"Neither the extraordinary partiality of the American people, the extravagant praises which were bestowed upon him, nor the inveterate opposition and malignant calumnies which he encountered, had any visible influence upon his conduct. The cause is to be looked for in the texture of his mind.

"In him, that innate and unassuming modesty which adulation would have offended, which the voluntary plaudits of millions could not betray into indiscretion, and which never obtruded upon others his claims to superior consideration, was happily blended with a high and correct sense of personal dignity, and with a just consciousness of that respect which is due to station. Without exertion he could maintain the happy medium between that arrogance which wounds and that facility which allows the office to be degraded in the person who fills it.

“It is impossible to contemplate the great events which have occurred in the United States under the auspices of Washington without ascribing them, in some measure, to him. If we ask the causes of the prosperous issue of a war, against the successful termination of which there were so many probabilities; of the good which was produced, and the ill which was avoided, during an administration fated to contend with the strongest prejudices that a combination of circumstances and of passions could produce; of the constant favor of the great mass of his fellow-citizens, and of the confidence which, to the last moment of his life, they reposed in him, the answer, so far as these causes may be found in his character, will furnish a lesson well meriting the attention of those who are candidates for political fame.

“Endowed by nature with a sound judgment, and an accurate discriminating mind, he feared not that laborious attention which made him perfectly master of those subjects, in all their relations, on which he was to decide; and this essential quality was guided by an unvarying sense of moral right, which would tolerate the employment only of those means that would bear the most rigid examination, by a fairness of intention which neither sought nor required disguise, and by a purity of virtue which was not only untainted but unsuspected.” \* \* \*

The eulogies of Washington, at the time of his death, were almost as numerous as the towns and cities of the republic; for everywhere funeral honors were paid to his memory. The following, by the celebrated orator, Fisher Ames, pronounced before the Legislature of Massachusetts, is as remarkable for its conciseness as for its just and comprehensive estimate of Washington's character.

“It is not impossible,” he said, “that some will affect to consider the honors paid to this great patriot by the nation as excessive, idolatrous, and degrading to freemen



who are all equal. I answer, that refusing to virtue its legitimate honors would not prevent their being lavished in future on any worthless and ambitious favorite. If this day's example should have its natural effect, it will be salutary. Let such honors be so conferred only when, in future, they shall be so merited; then the public sentiment will not be misled nor the principles of a just equality corrupted. The best evidence of reputation is a man's whole life. We have now, alas, all of Washington's before us. There has scarcely appeared a really great man whose character has been more admired in his lifetime or less correctly understood by his admirers. When it is comprehended it is no easy task to delineate its excellencies in such a manner as to give the portrait both interest and resemblance, for it requires thought and study to understand the true ground of the superiority of his character over many others, whom he resembled in the principles of action and even in the manner of acting. But, perhaps, he excels all the great men that ever lived, in the steadiness of his adherence to his maxims of life and in the uniformity of all his conduct to those maxims. Those maxims, though wise, were yet not so remarkable for their wisdom as for their authority over his life, for if there were any errors in his judgment — and he displayed as few as any man — we know of no blemishes in his virtue. He was the patriot without reproach; he loved his country well enough to hold success in serving it an ample recompense. Thus far, self-love and love of country coincided, but when his country needed sacrifices that no other man could, or perhaps would be willing to make, he did not even hesitate. This was virtue in its most exalted character. More than once he put his fame at hazard, when he had reason to think it would be sacrificed, at least in this age. Two instances cannot be denied: when the army was disbanded, and again when

he stood, like Leonidas at the pass of Thermopylæ, to defend our independence against France.

“It is indeed almost as difficult to draw his character as to draw the portrait of virtue. The reasons are similar; our ideas of moral excellence are obscure, because they are complex, and we are obliged to resort to illustrations. Washington’s example is the happiest to show what virtue is, and to delineate his character, we naturally expatiate on the beauty of virtue; much must be felt and much imagined. His pre-eminence is not so much to be seen in the display of any one virtue, as in the possession of them all and in the practice of the most difficult. Hereafter, therefore, his character must be studied before it will be striking, and then it will be admitted as a model—a precious one to a free republic.

“It is no less difficult to speak of his talents. They were adapted to lead, without dazzling mankind, and to draw forth and employ the talents of others without being misled by them. In this he was certainly superior, that he neither mistook nor misapplied his own. His great modesty and reserve would have concealed them if great occasions had not called them forth, and then, as he never spoke from the affectation to shine nor acted from any sinister motives, it is from their effects only that we are to judge of their greatness and extent. In public trusts, where men, acting conspicuously, are cautious, and in those private concerns where few conceal or resist their weakness, Washington was uniformly great, pursuing right conduct from right maxims. His talents were such as to assist a sound judgment and ripen with it. His prudence was consummate and seemed to take the direction of his powers and passions; for, as a soldier, he was more solicitous to avoid mistakes that might be fatal than to perform exploits that are brilliant; and, as a statesman, to adhere to just prin-

ciples, however old, than to pursue novelties ; and, therefore, in both characters, his qualities were singularly adapted to the interest and were tried in the greatest perils of the country. His habits of inquiry were so far remarkable that he was never satisfied with investigating, nor desisted from it, so long as he had less than all the light that he could obtain upon a subject, and then he made his decision without bias.

“ This command over the partialities that so generally stop men short or turn them aside in their pursuit of truth, is one of the chief causes of his unvaried course of right conduct in so many difficult scenes, where every human action must be presumed to err. If he had strong passions he had learned to subdue them, and to be moderate and mild. If he had weaknesses, he concealed them, which is rare, and excluded them from the government of his temper and conduct, which is still more rare. If he loved fame, he never made improper compliances for what is called popularity. The fame he enjoyed is of the kind that will last forever, yet it was rather the effect than the motive of his conduct. Some future Plutarch will search for a parallel to his character. Epaminondas is, perhaps, the brightest name of all antiquity. Our Washington resembled him in the purity and ardor of his patriotism, and, like him, he first exalted the glory of his country. There, it is to be hoped, the parallel ends, for Thebes fell with Epaminondas. But such comparisons cannot be pursued far without departing from the similitude. For we shall find it as difficult to compare great men as great rivers ; some we admire for the length and rapidity of their currents and the grandeur of their cataracts ; others for the majestic silence and fullness of their streams ; we cannot bring them together, to measure the difference of their waters. The unambitious life of Washington, declining fame yet courted

by it, seemed, like the Ohio, to choose its long way through solitudes, diffusing fertility, or like his own Potomac, widening and deepening its channel as it approaches the sea, and displaying most the usefulness and serenity of its greatness toward the end of its course. Such a citizen would do honor to any country. The constant veneration and affection of his country will show that it was worthy of such a citizen.

“However his military fame may excite the wonder of mankind, it is chiefly by his civil magistracy that his example will instruct them. Great generals have arisen in all ages of the world, and perhaps most of them in despotism and darkness. In times of violence and convulsion they rise, by the force of the whirlwind, high enough to ride in it and direct the storm. Like meteors, they glare on the black clouds with a splendor that, while it dazzles and terrifies, makes nothing visible but the darkness. The fame of heroes is indeed growing vulgar; they multiply in every long war; they stand in history and thicken in their ranks almost as undistinguished as their own soldiers.

“But such a chief magistrate as Washington appears like the pole-star in a clear sky to direct the skilful statesman. His presidency will form an epoch and be distinguished as the age of Washington. Already it assumes its high place in the political region. Like the milky-way, it whitens along its allotted portion of the hemisphere. The latest generations of men will survey, through the telescope of history, the space where so many virtues blend their rays, and delight to separate them into groups and distinct virtues. As the best illustration of them, the living monument, to which the first of patriots would have chosen to consign his fame, it is my earnest prayer to Heaven that our country may subsist even to that late day in the plenitude of its liberty and happiness, and mingle its mild glory with Washington’s.”



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